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Also by VINCIL C. COULTER, in collaboration with LOIS LAW, Assistant Professor of English, University of Wyoming . . . MANUAL AND EXERCISE BOOK FOR FIRST YEAR COLLEGE ENGLISH

READINGS IN LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

By

VINCIL C. COULTER

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PREFACE

The material collected in this volume has been used in first year college English classes for several years. The aim has been to give the freshman English course a content which is the peculiar province of the department of English. It seems both logical and practically helpful to use the freshman English classes for the purpose of organizing the thinking of students about their language and literature experiences rather than about matters which belong, by right, to other departments.

The use of language for reflection and for communication is a natural human function. Effective training in the use of language, like training in the exercise of any other normal function, implies bringing its processes into consciousness, submitting them to analysis, and habituating consciously recognized and approved techniques. It is the purpose of this volume to place in the hands of students typical material bearing upon the nature and functions of language and literature and to help them to recognize the unity underlying all phases of linguistic and literary study.

It is not to be assumed, of course, that students will learn in one year all they need to know about the subjects considered in this volume. The hope is, rather, to start thinking in the first year of college which may be followed up and enlarged upon in later work. Such methods tend to give a unity to the work of the English department not otherwise easy to attain.

In the Appendix will be found suggestions for methods of work. The questions on the various chapters may be turned into topics upon which notes may be taken. Consecutive thinking on these topics will necessitate considerable organization and writing. This writing, which arises

out of a necessity for clear thinking on interesting and fundamental types of human behavior, is the most effective kind of composition. The technique here presented is given fuller statement in the *Manual and Exercise Book for First Year College English*, by Vincil C. Coulter and Lois Law.

Since this course was organized, the trend of current thought has set very definitely toward the attitude here presented. Much of contemporary writing in psychology, in sociology, in education, in science, in law and politics, in religion, rests upon linguistic presuppositions which can be presented to the average college student only in freshman English. This technique and this psychological approach to the problems of language have proved to be of value to upper class students in other courses as well as in advanced courses in language and literature.

Thanks are due and hereby gratefully given to the authors of materials used, and to their publishers, to my associates who have experimented with these materials and methods during several years and who have made many helpful suggestions, and, especially, to Professors W. O. Clough and Lois Law, of the English Department of the University of Wyoming, for constant assistance in the selection of materials and the preparation of the manuscript.

VINCIL C. COULTER

Laramie, Wyoming,
August 4, 1930

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PART I

WHAT IS EDUCATION?

No man is a master of thought without being also a master of its vehicle and instrument, style, that subtle medium of all its evasive effects of light and shade. Scholarship is material; it is not life. It becomes immortal only when it is worked upon by conviction, by schooled and chastened imagination, by thought that runs alive out of inner fountains of individual insight and purpose.

—Woodrow Wilson, *Mere Literature*

CHAPTER 1

SOME QUESTIONS

> **The things taught in colleges and schools are not an education, but the means of education.**
>
> —EMERSON, *Journals*

The greatest compliment I can pay the students who may read this book—a compliment which years of experience with students justifies—is to assume that an appreciable number of them will welcome an opportunity to try their minds on a few of the problems that occupy the interested attention of thoughtful men and women. During the years in which these materials have been the basis for work in freshman English classes, many teachers have said, "Yes. Very interesting. But can freshmen understand these questions?" No. Freshmen cannot understand these questions. Neither can they understand mathematics, or chemistry, or politics. Any one who pretends to understand all about these other topics is a moron. But we try to present the simpler aspects of these subjects, even to freshmen. The purpose of the work outlined here is to open up some vital questions which may furnish interesting topics for intellectual speculation during your four years of college life, and also during all your years of intellectual activity. Incidentally, the work necessary for thinking in these fields will give excellent training in the use of language—the immediate object of your freshman English course.

Socrates is reported to have said that the unexamined life is not worth living. It is the examination of experience which teaches—experience thought about, analyzed, related to other experience.

Analysis implies question. The first step toward any intellectual achievement is the asking of questions. Not questions asked by an instructor to be answered in the words of the lecture or of the textbook, but questions aroused in our own minds by curiosity about the meaning of our experiences, to be answered by our own minds through further analysis and correlation of experiences—by thinking.

It is the purpose of the essays printed in this chapter to arouse questions. The questions which seem to these authors to be important have to do with the nature of life, with how man has come to be what he is and to believe as he does, with the meaning of success, with the reasons some courses of conduct are approved and others condemned, with the springs of human conduct, etc.

These and other questions are raised in the beginning of a course in English because they lead to necessary thought about education, and because the study of language and literature may be expected to furnish a basis for such tentative answers as civilization has so far evolved.

ADVICE TO FRESHMEN*

By Percy Marks

(During ten years of teaching English in American colleges, including Dartmouth College and Brown University, Percy Marks developed some very definite opinions upon the problems of education as they affect the young men and young women of the present college generation. Some of these opinions are to be found in the extract which follows. This author has published, in addition to *Which Way Parnassus? The Plastic Age*, 1924; *Martha*, 1925; and *Lord of Himself*, 1927.)

Foreword:

At the opening of the college year, the freshmen are always addressed by the president, the dean, the president

*Reprinted by permission from *Which Way Parnassus?* by Percy Marks, published by Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc., 1926.

of the student body, the football captain and the coach, and probably by the Y. M. C. A. secretary too. The president talks about the democratic ideals of the college, the dean about the importance of study, the president of the student body about the benefits of activities, the football captain and coach about the need for "getting back of the team," and the Y. M. C. A. secretary about morals and right living; indeed, there is practically nothing relating to college that isn't discussed for the benefit of the freshmen. Since the value of each address varies with the particular speaker, and since most of the speakers indulge in platitudinous generalizations that must be respected because of venerable years only, I am going to dare add myself to the already long list. At least, no freshman is forced to read this essay, and for that reason alone it must be admitted to have a kind of virtue. I want to speak my piece to the freshmen—and I hope that a few of them will be kind enough to listen.

GENTLEMEN, THE FRESHMEN:

I begin my address with "gentlemen, the freshmen," because the neatest speech I ever heard made to freshmen began with that phrase. Henry Morse Stephens, for many years a beloved professor at the University of California, made the speech at a rally in the Greek Theater when I was a freshman in 1908. This is what he said, minus, unfortunately, his Oxford accent: "Gentlemen, the freshmen: You have just come from being rather large frogs in a very small puddle. You are now very small frogs in a rather large puddle. Gentlemen, the freshmen, do not try to fill it—or you will BURST!"

Don't try to fill the puddle; try to fill yourselves instead. To explain my meaning, permit me to vary the figure a little. The college puddle is small, the waters calm. A weak swimmer, if he has the eagerness or the brashness to try, can swim across it and around it if he battles hard enough or has

the right kind of water-wings, but that he wins races in the still waters of the college puddle is no evidence that he can swim beyond the breakers in the great ocean. Try to learn a stronger stroke, one fit to breast turbulent waters and heavy storms. *Practice* in the puddle, but never forget that it is only a puddle, a swimming-pool where you have time to learn your stroke and try your strength. The pool is lovely, the waters pleasant, the sport delightful. Dive deep, swim hard, but always remember that the narrow bounds of the pool are not the far-flung boundaries of the world. They form a little golden circle within a greater, a limitless circle. Swim in it, play in it; but both your swimming and your play will be futile if you don't look beyond the circle to the life of which it is a part.

The figure is convenient, but I shall drop it lest I be accused of oratory. And, perhaps, after all, plain words are best. Let me speak plainly, then: you, the freshmen, come to college ready to worship it as a goal in itself. Most of you feel that nothing could be sweeter than to conquer college, to make a fraternity, to become prominent in activities, to be known as a leader. You dream iridescent dreams in which you see yourself being bowed to by the college gods, cheered by thousands, carried triumphant on the shoulders of your mates. Dream your dreams, make them come true if you can, but even while striving for the wonder of realization, look over and through the dream to the surge of life beyond. College is only an episode four years long. Those four years seem endless to you now; you feel as if you were going to spend all the rest of your life in college, but when you are a senior, you will say, as every senior does: "Why, it seems only yesterday that I was a freshman! Now I'm about to graduate." Inevitably his heart sinks a little. College has been beautiful and safe. The world waits—and he isn't ready. He can do

fancy dives in the puddle. Will he be able to swim in the sea?

Don't, in other words, take college life too seriously. Enjoy it to the full, but don't make it an end in itself. A young alumnus said to me recently: "I dropped all activities in my junior year and devoted my spare time to my friends. Now the activities are past with college; the friends remain." Friends are more important than undergraduate acclaim, and wisdom is more important than sapience in college politics. Take part in activities if they bring you pleasure; if you join a fraternity, recognize it as a club, use it as a club, and enjoy it as one; if you attain prominence in your class or college, drink gladly of the joy it brings, but remember that four years later there will be no one on the campus to whom your name will mean anything. Even the greatest athletes are soon forgotten. At best, your glory will be brief; you can be a college hero for only a day. Recognize that fact—then seek the glory if you will.

There is one thing more important to you than the activities, the fraternities, friends, undergraduate fame, or the college itself, and that one thing is you. Each one of you—that is, each one of you that is worth his salt—is struggling with certain questions. You are asking yourselves and perhaps your friends: What is life? What is success? What is happiness? What is good? And in the dark of the night you are asking yourself: What am I? What do I want? Where am I going? Those questions you must ask, somehow, some time; and the answers you find for them will determine largely what you will become and what you will find. Primarily, you have come to college to learn the answers to those questions, and your life depends on the answers. Each one of you will have to reach his own conclusions, since no one can reach them for you. Two thousand years ago, Pilate asked: "What is truth?" Mil-

lions have repeated the question, thousands have striven to answer it—and it remains the enigma of the world. You, too, must strive to answer it. You probably will never succeed, but in your striving you will attain something like education; you will learn something like wisdom. Out of the confusion, the contradictions, the eternal mysteries, you will evolve a philosophy of life—and to evolve that philosophy is your primary purpose in coming to college.

You will never achieve a definition of truth that will be entirely satisfactory to you or to the world, nor will you ever attain the complete understanding of many things that seems essential to successful living, but there is one problem that you can and must solve—yourself. If you are going to make a success of college and of the life after it, you must understand yourself. Most of you think you do—and most of you are wrong. It is a rare eighteen-year-old boy who has looked into himself with fearless eyes, who has stared bravely at what he has seen, and who hasn't hedged by transforming the actual into the ideal. What sort of person are you? You *must* know. What are your practices, what are your ideals, what do you want? It takes courage to answer these questions, because if you are any good, the answers are never satisfactory; but answer them you must, or how are you to know what courses you want to take, whether it is wise for you to join a fraternity, whether you ought to "go out" for activities or not, what type of friends you want to make and why, and what you want and can expect to get out of life?

Have you any idea of what you want to get out of life? Do you know why you have come to college? To have a good time, perhaps! Well, it is waiting for you. Perhaps to improve your social standing: the opportunity is there. Or, possibly, you think that a college degree will earn money for you: it may and it may not. There is a chance, of

course, that you want an education. Have you any idea of what you mean by "education"? You must find out. You are about to give thousands of dollars and four of the most precious years of your life to education. What is it? Why do you want it? You can't answer those important questions—and they are as important as life—without knowing yourself. *Know* yourself. All humanity, its aspirations, its aches and pains, its passions and its dreams, are concentrated in you. You cannot learn about others until you have learned about yourself, and when you have come to know yourself well, you have at the same time come to know much about others.

Part of you is your home and your family. Without scrutinizing them relentlessly, you can never understand your own nature and character. You weren't just born; you were made as well—and your family helped enormously to make you what you are. Let me warn you to be fair. If you happen to be a liar and a cheat, your family may be to blame; the chances are, though, that you were told time and again that lying and cheating were abominable. Why, then, do you lie and cheat? Probably because you are weak and cowardly. Judge your family as generously as you would judge yourself, but judge it fearlessly. Are your mother and father the kind of people to whom you can take your troubles, from whom you can expect understanding and sympathy? Or is your mother the sort of woman who merely takes it for granted that her son is saintlike because he is her son? Does she arrogate to herself the divine right to forgive you for sins that she never taught you were sins? If she must be deceived because she refuses to recognize your humanity, count yourself the loser. Are your parents vulgarians? Are they snobs? Look hard and you will find out, but be sure to define your terms. Remember that lack of education does not mean vulgarity and that high standards do not mean snobbery. Put your mother and

father under the microscope of your analysis; you will see faults and virtues. Recognize them for what they are, judging with relentless fairness. If you find that you have parents who are intelligent, understanding, and sympathetic, you are thrice blessed; if you find that they are stupid, didactic, and smug, you are to be pitied.

Unless you are very exceptional, every fault that you find in your family you will also find mirrored in yourself. Finding the faults and recognizing them is harder than getting rid of them; once you have discovered the fault and admitted it to be what it is, you have gone a long way on the road to casting it out. It is hard to remain vulgar once you have confessed your vulgarity to yourself; it is equally hard to remain a liar or a cheat after you have stabbed yourself with the opprobrium of those epithets. But I don't want to preach to you about your betterment; I want to impress on you that you can gain nothing educationally or socially in college until you have estimated your family and yourself. You cannot start for anywhere until you know where you are. You cannot get anything until you know what you want; nor can you begin your battle for it until you know both your weakness and your strength. "Know thyself" was carved over the doorway at Delphi. The Greeks lived deeply and learned much, and perhaps most of their wisdom was concentrated in those two words.

When you know what you are and what you want, then look at the college. Having found out what sort of person you are and what you expect the college to give you, you will be in a position to determine whether you have come to the right place or not. If you have found that you are not interested in ideas, that thinking is a dull and wearisome business, that study of all kinds is painfully onerous, the probabilities are that you do not belong in college at all. Perhaps mechanics fascinate you. Then leave college and

go to a trade school where you can get the training you need. It is no disgrace to be a good mechanic, though it may be a disgrace to be a poor engineer. Too many of you would rather be second in Rome than first in a little Iberian village; too many of you would rather scrape a miserable existence in the bedlam of New York than live richly and perhaps beautifully on a farm; too many of you would rather waste four years for the privilege of a degree than spend the time finding a place in life that you can occupy to the betterment of yourself and others. I admit that you are not necessarily the best judge of whether you ought to be in college, but you know at least whether you find pleasure in your studies or not. If you don't, if they mean nothing but unpleasant labor to you, the chances are that you are wasting time and money. Any man capable of benefiting from four years in college finds learning stimulating, exciting; it is often his most delightful "activity."

Be sure that you are in the right college, because colleges differ not only in quality but in aims as William Jennings Bryan differed from Huxley or Einstein; in other words, many colleges are run by bigots for bigots, binding the minds of their students with iron bands, evading knowledge and understanding, cringing from honest truth and progress; other colleges—not many of them, I confess—seek to show their students all that man has learned, to irritate their minds to an itch for learning, to stimulate them to an understanding of the wonder of the world, of the miracle of beauty, of the glory of knowledge. Which would you rather have: all that man has learned and thought and made, or the dogmas of a few ignorant pedants? If the president of your college knows everything and admits by word or attitude that he does, if the professors speak of eternal problems with definite finality, you are probably not in a college at all but in a fetid medieval dungeon. If, like

the president and professors, you too know all of God's secrets, stay there; you are where you belong; but if you are intelligent enough to feel terrified before your own ignorance, humble before learning, aghast before the heroic accomplishments of science, then go elsewhere; you are fit to be educated.

Do not take it for granted that "Prexie" is a wise man or a good man just because he happens to be president. Look him over; size him up as you would a classmate. Perhaps he is a strutting, pompous windbag. Plenty of college presidents are. Well, decide for yourself whether he is saying anything or whether he is just roaring platitudes. If he is commonplace and dull, nine times out of ten the professors will be commonplace and dull too, since dull college presidents are terrified of intelligent professors. You are spending time and money; you have a right to the best, granting, of course, that you have a right to go to college at all, and if you aren't getting the best, don't rest until you find it. Sentiment may deter you. Perhaps your father has gone to your college. It may have been a good college in his day, but if it isn't in yours, turn your back on it and search until you find one that is. Start your investigation with the president. He will not be an infallible index, but he will give you a hint at least. From him you can get some indication of what the college stands for, and always look behind his words for the facts. If he tells you that the college is liberal, a laboratory of thought, and you find the professors stuttering through gags, he is a liar; go elsewhere. College is too important; don't be fooled.

Don't be fooled, either, by your instructors—but judge them by honest standards. The average undergraduate expects an instructor to be as wise as Socrates, as eloquent as Daniel Webster, as witty as Oscar Wilde, as entertaining as E. Phillips Oppenheim, and as lusciously mellow as a ripe

melon. You are no judge of his wisdom unless he is obviously an ignoramus, and you have no right to demand wit, oratory, or mellowness, though, worse luck, you will probably get turgid oratory and elephantine wit. Entertainment, however, you have every right to expect, because if he knows how to teach, he will make the course as interesting as any show you ever attended. No drama behind the footlights was ever so thrilling as the drama of man—and every course you take in college, properly presented, is merely one of the acts of that tremendous drama. If you are in a large course with many sections and your instructor is a bore, don't hesitate to tell the head of your department that you are bored and that you want to be transferred to another section. He will probably refuse your request—department heads usually refuse requests as a matter of form—but if enough of you protest, he will be forced to take cognizance of your discontent and make some effort to alleviate it. If you have chosen an elective and find it conducted by an entertaining ignoramus or a smug Dryasdust, drop the course and choose another that is being taught, not murdered. Plainly—choose the instructor rather than the course. A competent man will teach you all you can absorb, regardless of his subject, and it is better to be inspired by a real teacher in a subject not inherently interesting to you than stultified by an arid pedagogue in a subject that you naturally find fascinating. After all, all the courses come from the great grab-bag of knowledge, and if in picking blindly, you clutch the wrong one, drop it and snatch again. It really doesn't make a great deal of difference what label the package bears. What the package contains will depend on the man who opens it; one will reveal wonders, another—dust.

Men commonly say that they learn more out of the classroom than in it, that "college life" in the end proves the real

teacher. Usually the men who make that statement are entirely sincere, but they rarely reveal how much interest they took with them to the classroom and how capable intellectually they were of receiving anything from it. I know of one dean who always tells the incoming freshmen that they are in college for one great purpose and that purpose is to study. He is right, but only half right! Study is not an end in itself, a good in itself. No, you are going to college for something greater than study, of which study is only a part. Most of the men who received more from "college life" than they did in the classroom recognized the fact that study alone could not give them all the fruits of college, but they did not recognize the equally important fact that study was a ladder on which they could climb to the highest part of the academic tree, where the most luscious fruits grow. Really, the distinction that I have just made between college life and study is an anomaly; rightly considered, study is the richest, the most delightful part of college life.

Most of you will not believe that statement. You will say: "Ah, there the pedagogue speaks!" Perhaps. I believe deeply in the truth of my assertion, nevertheless; and I believe in it so deeply because I have seen it proved many times. Once, for example, a boy came to me and told me that he was thinking of leaving college.

"I'm not learning a thing," he protested, "and I'm bored stiff. I'm getting so that I cut all the time, and I might just as well quit because I'm going to get flunked out if I don't."

He was by no means a dullard, and he was magnificently honest; he confessed that he had sucked college life dry by his sophomore year, and now in the beginning of it, he was hanging on miserably to the scarlet fringe; in other words, he was dissipating violently. I asked him if he had ever given his studies a chance, and he asked me what I meant.

"Well," I explained, "you seem to be one of the ninety-

and-nine who expect something for nothing. You expect to enjoy your classes without bringing either interest or effort to them. You don't study; you cut regularly; and by your own confession, when you do go, you slump supinely on the back of your neck and dare the instructor to interest you. Well, nobody is going to take you by your little hand and kiss the delight of learning into you. Have you noticed that while you may be bored in every course, there are fellows who are deeply interested, and that while you find it impossible to sit down and study, there are fellows who are actually eager to get to their books?"

He confessed that he had noticed the phenomenon but that he had made no effort to explain it.

"You are getting nothing from your courses," I continued, "because you are taking less to them, and you aren't going to get much fun out of anything in this life by sprawling in an easy-chair and moaning that life isn't interesting. If you were stupid, I'd tell you to quite college in a minute, both for your own good and the good of the college; but you aren't stupid, and there is no reason why you should not find both pleasure and profit in your studies. Why not give them at least a sporting chance? Why not try studying for a while? Who knows? You might find it an interesting experience; at least it will be something different."

The novelty of the idea seemed to appeal to him. After two weeks of studying, he told me with grumbling resentment that he was working like a fool trying to catch up and that if I thought he was getting any thrills, I was a naïve child. I replied that he was the naïve child, since he so ingenuously expected to make up for past sins, carry on with the class, and create new interest at the same time. It took him a few weeks to realize that mere regret and new-found good intentions will not compensate for past laziness and ignorant guilt. In less than two months, however, he con-

fessed to real pleasure in his work, and by the end of the term he was actually excited about it. He never lost the excitement, furthermore, and graduated with his class, proud of what he had learned and eager to learn more. That man will testify, I know, in any court that his most delightful activity was study and that the cream of college life is in becoming acquainted not with one's fellows, many of whom are dull clods, but with the greatest who have ever lived.

And that, you know, is what studying is: getting acquainted with the wisest, the wittiest, the most delightful people who have ever walked this earth. The instructor is merely a go-between, an introducer. To all intents and purposes all that he does is say: "Gentlemen, my students: I wish to present to you William Shakespeare. He has a great deal to tell you, and he can tell it more delightfully, more beautifully, than any man speaking or writing the English language. He will make you laugh until your sides ache. He has a story about Prince Hal and John Falstaff so funny that I warn you here and now to hang on to any loose buttons. He has a story about a Moor named Othello who loved not wisely but too well; it is dramatic, it is tender, it is passionate. You will weep, and you will be better for the weeping. So, too, will you weep when he tells you about Prince Hamlet. There is so much of Hamlet in each of you that you will feel that he is telling your story, too; your inner story, I mean. Gentlemen, my students: William Shakespeare, the most poetic, the most dramatic, the most superb story-teller in the world."

No one can teach you Shakespeare so well as Shakespeare can, no one can teach you science as Huxley can, and no one can teach you philosophy as Plato can; but you might never hear of Shakespeare, Huxley, and Plato if your instructor did not tell you about them. The great dead are shy, hiding all their wisdom and poetry, the wisdom and

poetry of the world, in the quiet of college campuses. They do not walk the streets, slapping Tom, Dick, and Harry on the back, handing them carelessly their precious treasures, so long sought for, so tenderly labored over. Only the earnest can meet them, only the humble can win their love, only the zealous can find the way to their treasure house. The instructor is a guide, waiting to show you the road. He may be a poor guide, leading you blindly by the hand, but if he is willing, if he is eager to lead, do not scorn his help. Together you may find something inestimably precious.

Gentlemen, the freshmen: you are little frogs in a comparatively large pond. It is lovely, this pond, its waters lily-strewn, its banks shaded and cool. Why try to fill the pond? Why burst your heart with useless striving? Look to the lilies and the flowers growing on the banks. The waters of the pond are crystal-clear for those who would look deep in them, the perfume of the flowers sweet for those who would bow and breathe their fragrance, the sky beyond the whispering trees blue and pure for those who would look. You have only four years. Look far and see wisdom, breathe deep and drink into your soul all beauty, lift your eyes to the boundless dome of aspiration. Four years—beyond them life, life with its labor, its mysteries, its joys, its sorrows. Gather flowers with your left hand; with your right, forge a sword of finest steel. You have a battle yet to fight, with happiness its goal. If you would be armed well, no time must be lost—and the armor must be an alloy of your own soul and all wisdom; it must be welded with your brain, your strength, your dreams.

Gentlemen, the freshmen: you have come to college. Let me present you to your fellows, to the thousands of great who have made you, to the living Now of which you are a part. Four years! College. . . .

THE PROBLEM*

By James Harvey Robinson

(As historian, teacher, author, editor, James Harvey Robinson has for a generation been a constructive thinker in the field of present intellectual and social problems. He is most widely known, perhaps, because of his efforts to make the knowledge of the specialist available to the general reader. *The Mind in the Making* is a popular presentation of the history of the mental attitudes and techniques which are our heritage and with which we have to work. The passage here given raises some of the questions which any intelligent man must raise and attempt to answer as a part of his education.)

If some magical transformation could be produced in men's ways of looking at themselves and their fellows, no inconsiderable part of the evils which now afflict society would vanish away or remedy themselves automatically. If the majority of influential persons held the opinions and occupied the point of view that a few rather uninfluential people now do, there would, for instance, be no likelihood of another great war; the whole problem of "labor and capital" would be transformed and attentuated; national arrogance, race animosity, political corruption, and inefficiency would all be reduced below the danger point. As an old Stoic proverb has it, men are tormented by the opinions they have of things, rather than by the things themselves. This is eminently true of many of our worst problems to-day. We have available knowledge and ingenuity and material resources to make a far fairer world than that in which we find ourselves, but various obstacles prevent our intelligently availing ourselves of them. The object of this book is to substantiate this proposition, to exhibit with entire frankness the tremendous difficulties that stand in the way of such a beneficent change of mind, and to point out as clearly as may be some of the measures to be taken in order to overcome them.

* Reprinted by permission from *The Mind in the Making,* by James Harvey Robinson, published by Harper and Brothers, 1921.

When we contemplate the shocking derangement of human affairs which now prevails in most civilized countries, including our own, even the best minds are puzzled and uncertain in their attempts to grasp the situation. The world seems to demand a moral and economic regeneration which it is dangerous to postpone, but as yet impossible to imagine, let alone direct. The preliminary intellectual regeneration which would put our leaders in a position to determine and control the course of affairs has not taken place. We have unprecedented conditions to deal with and novel adjustments to make—there can be no doubt of that. We also have a great stock of scientific knowledge unknown to our grandfathers with which to operate. So novel are the conditions, so copious the knowledge, that we must undertake the arduous task of reconsidering a great part of the opinions about man and his relations to his fellow-men which have been handed down to us by previous generations who lived in far other conditions and possessed far less information about the world and themselves. We have, however, first to create an *unprecedented attitude of mind to cope with unprecedented conditions, and to utilize unprecedented knowledge.* This is the preliminary, and most difficult, step to be taken —far more difficult than one would suspect who fails to realize that in order to take it we must overcome inveterate natural tendencies and artificial habits of long standing. How are we to put ourselves in a position to come to think of things that we not only never thought of before, but are most reluctant to question? In short, how are we to rid ourselves of our fond prejudices and *open our minds?*

As a historical student who for a good many years has been especially engaged in inquiring how man happens to have the ideas and convictions about himself and human relations which now prevail, the writer has reached the conclusion that history can at least shed a great deal of light on our present predicaments and confusion. I do not mean

by history that conventional chronicle of remote and irrelevant events which embittered the youthful years of many of us, but rather a study of how man has come to be as he is and to believe as he does.

No historian has so far been able to make the whole story very plain or popular, but a number of considerations are obvious enough, and it ought not to be impossible some day to popularize them. I venture to think that if certain seemingly indisputable historical facts were generally known and accepted and permitted to play a daily part in our thought, the world would forthwith become a very different place from what it now is. We could then neither delude ourselves in the simple-minded way we now do, nor could we take advantage of the primitive ignorance of others. All our discussions of social, industrial, and political reform would be raised to a higher plane of insight and fruitfulness.

In one of those brilliant divagations with which Mr. H. G. Wells is wont to enrich his novels he says:

"When the intellectual history of this time comes to be written, nothing, I think, will stand out more strikingly than the empty gulf in quality between the superb and richly fruitful scientific investigations that are going on, and the general thought of other educated sections of the community. I do not mean that scientific men are, as a whole, a class of supermen, dealing with and thinking about everything in a way altogether better than the common run of humanity, but in their field they think and work with an intensity, an integrity, a breadth, boldness, patience, thoroughness, and faithfulness—excepting only a few artists—which puts their work out of all comparison with any other human activity. . . . In these particular directions the human mind has achieved a new and higher quality of attitude and gesture, a veracity, a self-detachment, and self-abnegating vigor of criticism that tend to spread out and must ultimately spread out to every other human affair."

No one who is even most superficially acquainted with the achievements of students of nature during the past few centuries can fail to see that their thought has been astoundingly effective in constantly adding to our knowledge of the universe, from the hugest nebula to the tiniest atom; moreover, this knowledge has been so applied as to well-nigh revolutionize human affairs, and both the knowledge and its applications appear to be no more than hopeful beginnings, with indefinite revelations ahead, if only the same kind of thought be continued in the same patient and scrupulous manner.

But the knowledge of man, of the springs of his conduct, of his relation to his fellow-men singly or in groups, and the felicitous regulation of human intercourse in the interest of harmony and fairness, have made no such advance. Aristotle's treatises on astronomy and physics, and his notions of "generation and decay" and of chemical processes, have long gone by the board, but his politics and ethics are still revered. Does this mean that his penetration in the sciences of man exceeded so greatly his grasp of natural science, or does it mean that the progress of mankind in the scientific knowledge and regulation of human affairs has remained almost stationary for over two thousand years? I think that we may safely conclude that the latter is the case. It has required three centuries of scientific thought and of subtle inventions for its promotion to enable a modern chemist or physicist to center his attention on electrons and their relation to the mysterious nucleus of the atom, or to permit an embryologist to study the early stirrings of the fertilized egg. As yet relatively little of the same kind of thought has been brought to bear on human affairs.

When we compare the discussions in the United States Senate in regard to the League of Nations with the consideration of a broken-down car in a roadside garage the contrast is shocking. The rural mechanic thinks scientifically;

his only aim is to avail himself of his knowledge of the nature and workings of the car, with a view to making it run once more. The Senator, on the other hand, appears too often to have little idea of the nature and workings of nations, and he relies on rhetoric and appeals to vague fears and hopes or mere partisan animosity. The scientists have been busy for a century in revolutionizing the *practical* relation of nations. The ocean is no longer a barrier, as it was in Washington's day, but to all intents and purposes a smooth avenue closely connecting, rather than safely separating, the eastern and western continents. The Senator will nevertheless unblushingly appeal to policies of a century back, suitable, mayhap, in their day, but now become a warning rather than a guide. The garage man, on the contrary, takes his mechanism as he finds it, and does not allow any mystic respect for the earlier forms of the gas engine to interfere with the needed adjustments.

Those who have dealt with natural phenomena, as distinguished from purely human concerns, did not, however, quickly or easily gain popular approbation and respect. The process of emancipating natural science from current prejudices, both of the learned and of the unlearned, has been long and painful, and is not wholly completed yet. If we go back to the opening of the seventeenth century we find three men whose business it was, above all, to present and defend common sense in the natural sciences. The most eloquent and variedly persuasive of these was Lord Bacon. Then there was the young Descartes trying to shake himself loose from his training in a Jesuit seminary by going into the Thirty Years' War, and starting his intellectual life all over by giving up for the moment all he had been taught. Galileo had committed an offense of a grave character by discussing in the mother tongue the problems of physics. In his old age he was imprisoned and sentenced to repeat the seven penitential psalms for differing from Aristotle and

Moses and the teachings of the theologians. On hearing Galileo's fate, Descartes burned a book he had written, *On the World*, lest he, too, get into trouble.

From that time down to the days of Huxley and John Fiske the struggle has continued, and still continues—the Three Hundred Years' War for intellectual freedom in dealing with natural phenomena. It has been a conflict against ignorance, tradition, and vested interests in church and university, with all that preposterous invective and cruel misrepresentation which characterize the fight against new and critical ideas. Those who cried out against scientific discoveries did so in the name of God, of man's dignity, and of holy religion and morality. Finally, however, it has come about that our instruction in the natural sciences is tolerably free; although there are still large bodies of organized religious believers who are hotly opposed to some of the more fundamental findings of biology. Hundreds of thousands of readers can be found for Pastor Russell's exegesis of Ezekiel and the Apocalypse to hundreds who read Conklin's *Heredity and Environment* or Slosson's *Creative Chemistry*. No publisher would accept a historical textbook based on an explicit statement of the knowledge we now have of man's animal ancestry. In general, however, our scientific men carry on their work and report their results with little or no effective hostility on the part of the clergy or the schools. The social body has become tolerant of their virus.

This is not the case, however, with the social sciences. One cannot but feel a little queasy when he uses the expression "social science," because it seems as if we had not as yet got anywhere near a real science of man. I mean by social science our feeble efforts to study man, his natural equipment and impulses, and his relations to his fellows in the light of his origin and the history of the race. This enterprise has hitherto been opposed by a large number of obstacles essentially more hampering and far more numer-

ous than those which for three hundred years hindered the advance of the natural sciences. Human affairs are in themselves far more intricate and perplexing than molecules and chromosomes. But this is only the more reason for bringing to bear on human affairs that critical type of thought and calculation for which the remunerative thought about molecules and chromosomes has prepared the way.

I do not for a moment suggest that we can use precisely the same kind of thinking in dealing with the quandaries of mankind that we use in problems of chemical reaction and mechanical adjustment. Exact scientific results, such as might be formulated in mechanics, are, of course, out of the question. It would be unscientific to expect to apply them. I am not advocating any particular method of treating human affairs, but rather such a *general frame of mind, such a critical open-minded attitude*, as has hitherto been but sparsely developed among those who aspire to be men's guides, whether religious, political, economic, or academic. Most human progress has been, as Wells expresses it, a mere "muddling through." It has been man's wont to explain and sanctify his ways, with little regard to their fundamental and permanent expediency. An arresting example of what this muddling may mean we have seen during these recent years in the slaying or maiming of fifteen million of our young men, resulting in incalculable loss, continued disorder, and bewilderment. Yet men seem blindly driven to defend and perpetuate the conditions which produced the last disaster.

Unless we wish to see a recurrence of this or some similar calamity, we must, as I have already suggested, create a new and unprecedented attitude of mind to meet the new and unprecedented conditions which confront us. *We should proceed to the thorough reconstruction of our mind, with a view to understanding actual human conduct and organization.* We must examine the facts freshly, critically, and dispassionately, and then allow our philosophy to formulate itself

as a result of this examination, instead of permitting our observations to be distorted by archaic philosophy, political economy, and ethics. As it is, we are taught our philosophy first, and in its light we try to justify the facts. We must reverse this process, as did those who began the great work in experimental science; we must first face the facts, and patiently await the emergence of a new philosophy.

A willingness to examine the very foundations of society does not mean a desire to encourage or engage in any hasty readjustment, but certainly no wise or needed readjustment *can* be made unless such an examination is undertaken.

I come back, then, to my original point that in this examination of existing facts, history, by revealing the origin of many of our current fundamental beliefs, will tend to free our minds so as to permit honest thinking. Also, that the historical facts which I propose to recall would, if permitted to play a constant part in our thinking, automatically eliminate a very considerable portion of the gross stupidity and blindness which characterize our present thought and conduct in public affairs, and would contribute greatly to developing the needed scientific attitude toward human concerns—in other words, to *bringing the mind up to date.*

A LIBERAL EDUCATION*

By Thomas Henry Huxley

(Thomas Henry Huxley, 1825-1895, was one of the foremost English scientists during the last half of the nineteenth century. He was an effective speaker and writer and contributed much to the application of scientific facts and methods to education.)

And by way of a beginning, let us ask ourselves—What is education? Above all things, what is our ideal of a thor-

* These paragraphs are taken from the address delivered by Thomas Henry Huxley in January, 1868, at the opening of the South London Working Men's College.

oughly liberal education?—of that education which, if we could begin life again, we would give ourselves—of that education which, if we could mold the fates to our own will, we would give our children? Well, I know not what may be your conceptions upon this matter, but I will tell you mine, and I hope I shall find that our views are not very discrepant.

Suppose it were perfectly certain that the life and fortune of every one of us would, one day or other, depend upon his winning or losing a game of chess. Don't you think that we should all consider it to be a primary duty to learn at least the names and the moves of the pieces; to have a notion of a gambit, and a keen eye for all the means of giving and getting out of check? Do you not think that we should look with a disapprobation amounting to scorn, upon the father who allowed his son, or the state which allowed its members, to grow up without knowing a pawn from a knight?

Yet it is a very plain and elementary truth that the life, the fortune, and the happiness of every one of us, and, more or less, of those who are connected with us, do depend upon our knowing something of the rules of a game infinitely more difficult and complicated than chess. It is a game which has been played for untold ages, every man and woman of us being one of the two players in a game of his or her own. The chess-board is the world, the pieces are the phenomena of the universe, the rules of the game are what we call the laws of Nature. The player on the other side is hidden from us. We know that his play is always fair, just, and patient. But also we know, to our cost, that he never overlooks a mistake, or makes the smallest allowance for ignorance. To the man who plays well, the highest stakes are paid, with that sort of overflowing generosity with which the strong shows delight in strength. And one who plays ill is checkmated—without haste, but without remorse.

My metaphor will remind some of you of the famous

picture in which Retzsch has depicted Satan playing at chess with man for his soul. Substitute for the mocking fiend in that picture a calm, strong angel who is playing for love, as we say, and would rather lose than win—and I should accept it as an image of human life.

Well, what I mean by Education is learning the rules of this mighty game. In other words, education is the instruction of the intellect in the laws of Nature, under which name I include not merely things and their forces, but men and their ways; and the fashioning of the affections and of the will into an earnest and loving desire to move in harmony with those laws. For me, education means neither more nor less than this. Anything which professes to call itself education must be tried by this standard, and if it fails to stand the test, I will not call it education, whatever may be the force of authority, or of numbers, upon the other side.

It is important to remember that, in strictness, there is no such thing as an uneducated man. Take an extreme case. Suppose that an adult man, in the full vigor of his faculties, could be suddenly placed in the world, as Adam is said to have been, and then left to do as he best might. How long would he be left uneducated? Not five minutes. Nature would begin to teach him, through the eye, the ear, the touch, the properties of objects. Pain and pleasure would be at his elbow telling him to do this and avoid that; and by slow degrees the man would receive an education which, if narrow, would be thorough, real, and adequate to his circumstances, though there would be no extras and very few accomplishments.

And if to this solitary man entered a second Adam, or, better still, an Eve, a new and greater world, that of social and moral phenomena, would be revealed. Joys and woes, compared with which all others might seem but faint shadows, would spring from the new relations. Happiness and sorrow would take the place of the coarser monitors,

pleasure and pain; but conduct would still be shaped by the observation of the natural consequences of actions; or, in other words, by the laws of the nature of man.

To every one of us the world was once as fresh and new as to Adam. And then, long before we were susceptible of any other mode of instruction, Nature took us in hand, and every minute of waking life brought its educational influence, shaping our actions into rough accordance with Nature's laws, so that we might not be ended untimely by too gross disobedience. Nor should I speak of this process of education as past for any one, be he as old as he may. For every man the world is as fresh as it was at the first day, and as full of untold novelties for him who has the eyes to see them. And Nature is still continuing her patient education of us in that great university, the universe, of which we are all members—Nature having no Test-Acts.

Those who take honors in Nature's university, who learn the laws which govern men and things and obey them, are the really great and successful men in this world. The great mass of mankind are the "Poll," who pick up just enough to get through without much discredit. Those who won't learn at all are plucked; and then you can't come up again. Nature's pluck means extermination.

Thus the question of compulsory education is settled so far as Nature is concerned. Her bill on that question was framed and passed long ago. But, like all compulsory legislation, that of Nature is harsh and wasteful in its operation. Ignorance is visited as sharply as willful disobedience—incapacity meets with the same punishment as crime. Nature's discipline is not even a word and a blow, and the blow first; but the blow without the word. It is left to you to find out why your ears are boxed.

The object of what we commonly call education—that education in which man intervenes and which I shall distinguish as artificial education—is to make good these defects

in Nature's methods; to prepare the child to receive Nature's education, neither incapably nor ignorantly, nor with willful disobedience; and to understand the preliminary symptoms of her pleasure, without waiting for the box on the ear. In short, all artificial education ought to be an anticipation of natural education. And a liberal education is an artificial education which has not only prepared a man to escape the great evils of disobedience to natural laws, but has trained him to appreciate and to seize upon the rewards, which Nature scatters with as free a hand as her penalties.

That man, I think, has had a liberal education who has been so trained in youth that his body is the ready servant of his will, and does with ease and pleasure all the work that, as a mechanism, it is capable of; whose intellect is a clear, cold, logic engine, with all its parts of equal strength, and in smooth working order; ready, like a steam engine, to be turned to any kind of work, and spin the gossamers as well as forge the anchors of the mind; whose mind is stored with a knowledge of the great and fundamental truths of Nature and of the laws of her operations; one who, no stunted ascetic, is full of life and fire, but whose passions are trained to come to heel by a vigorous will, the servant of a tender conscience; who has learned to love all beauty, whether of Nature or of art, to hate all vileness, and to respect others as himself.

Such a one and no other, I conceive, has had a liberal education; for he is, as completely as a man can be, in harmony with Nature. He will make the best of her, and she of him. They will get on together rarely; she as his ever beneficent mother; he as her mouthpiece, her conscious self, her minister and interpreter.

CHAPTER 2

HOW TO ANSWER YOUR QUESTIONS

> To venture an opinion is like moving a piece at chess: it may be taken but it forms the beginning of a game that is won.
>
> —GOETHE

If the questions raised in Chapter 1 become insistent enough, you will find some kind of answer to them; though the first answer may prove unsatisfactory and the game may not be won for years. The only legitimate hope for finally winning the game lies in a careful consideration of all the data according to the best available techniques.

Effective thinking utilizes, primarily, the facts of personal experience—what you see, hear, feel, etc., together with the group of judgments of value which are, for the most part, matters of social inheritance through the media of language and literature. In addition to these matters of personal experience, all of us utilize constantly, in our thinking, facts and the opinions of others developed in conversation or recorded in books, magazines, newspapers.

Much of our thinking on these data is carried on with as little reflective consciousness as the processes of digestion. But if one desires to answer the questions as to the kind of person he is and the meaning of success, "to create an unprecedented attitude of mind to cope with unprecedented conditions, and to utilize unprecedented knowledge," it is necessary to master a more conscious technique of work. Suggestions for an effective technique are in the Appendix.[1]

[1] See also V. C. Coulter and Lois Law, *Manual and Exercise Book for First Year College English*, The Ronald Press Company, 1930, for technique and bibliography.

In this chapter are a few essays describing the attitude of mind demanded by the complexities of modern life, and showing something of the place of books in building up the required attitude. It is well to recognize at the beginning that, among writers of different ages and races, there will be found differences of opinion. For instance, Schopenhauer seems to differ from Locke, Bacon, and Ruskin regarding the function of books as feeders of thought. Only careful analysis will indicate whether this difference is merely verbal, or whether it rests upon failure, on the part of one or another, to consider all the facts involved. The student who makes adequate notes of significant facts and opinions may expect to arrive at somewhat satisfactory conclusions.

SCIENTIFIC THINKING*

By Edwin E. Slosson

(Edwin Emery Slosson, 1865-1929, was Professor of Chemistry at the University of Wyoming from 1891 to 1903; later he was literary editor of the *Independent*, and director of Science Service. In his latter position, it was his effort to give general currency through the press to the latest findings of science. He was the author of a number of books, including *Great American Universities*, 1910; *Major Prophets of Today*, 1914; *Creative Chemistry*, 1919; and, in collaboration with Dr. June Downey, *Plots and Personalities*, 1922. In the extract given here, Dr. Slosson finds the main object of education to be to teach people how to think right on all social and intellectual matters.)

The world, like a child at Christmas, accepts with pleasure, if not with gratitude, the material gifts of science, metals and movies, railroads and radio, foods and fine raiment. But the world turns a deaf ear when science would talk about peace, order, economy, foresight, efficiency and the frank facing of facts.

* From an address delivered by Dr. Edwin E. Slosson before the second annual meeting of the American Association for Adult Education held at Cleveland, Ohio, May 16-18, 1927. Reprinted by permission of the author and of the Association.

To provide the public with the means of easy, accurate scientific information throughout life is a difficult and important task. But it is much more difficult and vastly more important to develop the habit of scientific thinking. The acceptance of a single scientific fact by any man, or any multitude of men, does little good if it leaves the mind of man unmoved. What he needs is greater appreciation of the experimental processes by which scientific principles are discovered and established. Otherwise he will not be able to distinguish between genuine scientific discoveries and their pseudomorphs, the fakes, in after-life. He will not know how to distinguish the man who knows from the man who pretends to know. This ability is more important in a democracy than anywhere else. The danger in an aristocracy is that the people will respect and follow those that are not worthy. The danger in a democracy is that the people will fail to respect and follow those who are worthy of such confidence. Envy of the expert is a common human failing. We none of us are free from the desire to look down on those who have the right to look down upon us. We all of us take a secret delight in the humiliation of our superiors, and we rejoice in disclosing the ignorance of those who know more than we do. This natural human weakness becomes a public menace when it is multiplied by a million. It accounts for the votes cast against Aristides the Just and for the disposition to elect as our representatives not outstanding men but average men. This does not matter much in ordinary political affairs, for politics is not yet a science and there are many ways of reaching the same result. In science there is only one truth, but an infinitude of falsehoods. An unwise popular vote on a political question may bring a temporary calamity upon the nation, but an unsound popular opinion of a scientific question may bring permanent ruin to a race. The fate of the nation depends less on how the people cast their ballots than on how they combine their chromosomes.

The main object of education in a democracy is not to teach the people how to vote right, but to train them how to think right. Under any form of government, in an autocracy no less than in a democracy, the real power lies in the people, and it is their individual conduct, guided by their personal beliefs, that determines whether the nation shall advance, stagnate or retrograde.

One of the surprising facts that we have found out in the efforts of Science Service to aid the popular press in keeping up with scientific progress is that the hardest thing to sell to a newspaper is news. Old ideas go best, if dressed in slightly novel guise, just as an old joke is surest to win a laugh from a crowd. The facts and theories now being brought out in many of the sciences are so novel and revolutionary that they are instinctively rejected by the lay mind as unassimilable. This is not because they are incomprehensible but simply because they are unfamiliar. I have often tried to get over a strange idea by building up a gradual ramp from common ground to the point where it is an easy step to the new notion but the editor is apt to cut off the very point which the article was written to convey, leaving only the conventional and common-place material used as an approach to the novel information.

One obstacle in the way of spreading science, that is, of inculcating the scientific habit of mind, is that people have learned to read too well. Books may become an impediment to learning. Our students are taught how to learn to read but not always how to read to learn. They look *at* a book instead of looking *through* it. This is what a child does when a microscope or telescope is first put into his hands. His attention is absorbed in the instrument, not in what it is designed to reveal. Consequently, science has often to overcome the over-bookishness of present-day pupils. In one of our large high schools, where a reference librarian is employed to provide books needed for theme writing, a boy

lounged up to the desk and remarked: "Gimme the books for today's theme." "What is the topic?" asked the librarian. "What I Saw On The Way To School This Morning," replied the boy.

In watching a party of tourists going through a European museum, you will often find that they are looking at their guide or their guide-book instead of the object they have come to see. If you are travelling on a scenic railway in Switzerland you may sometimes see in the compartment a tourist who sits with his back to the window so the light may fall over his left shoulder while he reads a volume on "Hours Among The Alps." This tendency to substitute books for reality, to sublimate life into literature, to screen nature with art, is something with which the librarian and the teacher have to contend.

Many of our young folks prefer the motion picture to personal experience, which is doubtless fortunate, considering the character of the movies. Some people will go miles to an art gallery to see a picture of a pig in a frame who would not think of looking at a pig in a pen. They will even pay money to listen to a lecture on the life of the artist who painted the pig that they disdain to glance at. In some countries this worship of the word is carried even farther than with us. A German professor has said that if the German people after death were placed before two portals, one marked "Heaven" and the other marked "Lectures on Heaven," they would all troop into the lecture hall.

In the world outside the school walls a man's major study is his life work, his vocation, his service to society. To this he should give his best and highest thought, his single-hearted devotion, though that need not prevent him from carrying one or more minor studies as well, and continuing his general education in every possible direction at the same time.

Such side-line studies require special attention, for while the world will not usually permit a man to neglect his busi-

ness, it has no interest in giving him a well-rounded education. In school the faculty saw to it that his range of studies was not too narrow, but off the campus all studies save one or two are elective, and a man is left to arrange his own curriculum, with courses unlimited in number and extent, offered by millions of instructors, animate and inanimate, and with no rules as to hours of study.

It is by the conduct of a man under these circumstances that we can tell what his school training has been and whether it has shown him how to educate himself. If it has developed in him an insatiable and omnivorous curiosity, and taught him how to gratify it, his schooling has been a success, and, if he has the will, he may in time become an educated man.

This process of daily education consists not so much in the search for recondite information and the pursuit of prearranged courses of study, as it does in the classification of the facts which are thrust upon his attention all the time and which demand his attention and interpretation. In so far as he searches for information, it is for explanation, not for acquisition. The educated man knows that mere facts are better kept in books than in the memory, just as seeds are safer stored in the cupboard than in the ground where, unless they can grow, they will rot. His main object is not the accumulation but the correlation of facts. This is what his mind has been trained for. It spontaneously sorts and arranges the multitudinous impressions of sight and sound in much the same way as the linotype receives the miscellaneous type matrices dropped into it at the top and automatically runs each into its proper channel, ready to be released and dropped into place at the touch of the key to produce a meaningful message.

The primary object of school training is to furnish the mind with such a mechanism. The educated man has a niche ready for the reception of almost any fact that may

be presented to him. Even if it is entirely new to him, he knows at once where it belongs. In the modern method of building a city block, a steel skeleton of the complete structure is first set up, then work can be carried on simultaneously on every story and any material can be at once utilized. Such a mental framework is, or should be, provided by the college course; so complete and well planned that the man can build upon it all he learns afterwards without having to tear it down and rearrange it with the acquisition of new data.

In addition to what has been mentioned, the man who is capable of educating himself has acquired the faculty for the selective absorption of facts. He can distinguish without much mental effort what information is useful and assimilable for him at any given time, and he instinctively rejects what is not. The sea anemone and carnivorous flowers have the power of distinguishing what is nutritious from what is indigestible to them, but this is a faculty of which, in mental life, many human beings are almost entirely destitute. They take and try to keep whatever comes to them, good and bad, true and false, important and insignificant. If they read books, they read them through. They swallow a newspaper whole with the thoroughness of a hungry man at a table d'hôte dinner.

Given a man who has the desire to learn, who knows how to learn, and who can utilize what he learns, he will never lack for opportunity for continuing his education through life, no matter how busy he may be or how limited his environment. There is scarcely a branch that he has begun in school which he may not pursue. He will take pains not to neglect any one of them, partly because he knows the need of keeping himself from becoming mentally lop-sided, partly because he realizes that the pupil in the school of life is never told when the examinations are to come nor what subjects will be set in them. He only knows that they are inevitable and, since one cannot cram for the unknown and unexpected, the safe way is to be always prepared. He realizes that now,

as much as when he was in school, he is under a task-master, who punishes relentlessly a failure to learn the lessons of life he sets, although he keeps himself so much in the background many do not know he is there, and lay it to their bad luck when they fail. Ignorance of the laws of nature excuses no one. We have to live in accordance with them if we are to live at all, and the more we know of them the better we can live.

The fundamental difference between the educated man and the uneducated is that the former sees with the mind as well as with the eye. Behind the superficialities he perceives the realities. He sees objects in three dimensions while the ignorant sees only two because he is lacking in the sense of perspective. The two men look at the same world, but when the one sees laws the other sees only phenomena. It is the same difference as exists between a newspaper in our own tongue and one in a foreign and unknown tongue. We can see as much *on* a foreign newspaper as the foreigner but we cannot see as much *in* it. The layman may have the same eyesight as the scientist but not the insight.

READING

By John Locke

(John Locke, 1632-1704, lived through the troublesome years of the seventeenth century in England. As an ardent champion of civil and religious liberty, he lived some years in Holland in voluntary exile. He takes his place among the succession of great writers on education and philosophy. *The Essay Concerning Human Understanding* is an attempt to state "the original, certainty, and extent of human knowledge, together with the grounds and degrees of belief, opinion, and dissent." These extracts indicate that problems with which students of today must deal were recognized by earlier generations.)

This is that which I think great readers are apt to be mistaken in. Those who have read of everything are thought

to understand everything too; but it is not always so. Reading furnishes the mind only with materials of knowledge; it is thinking makes what we read ours. We are of the ruminating kind, and it is not enough to cram ourselves with a great load of collections; unless we chew them over again, they will not give us strength and nourishment. There are indeed, in some writers, visible instances of deep thought, close and acute reasoning, and ideas well pursued. The light these would give would be of great use if their readers would observe and imitate them; all the rest, at best, are but particulars fit to be turned into knowledge; but that can be done only by our own meditation, and examining the reach, force, and coherence of what is said; and then, as far as we apprehend and see the connexion of ideas, so far is it ours; without that it is but so much loose matter floating in our brain. The memory may be stored, but the judgment is little better, and the stock of knowledge not increased by being able to repeat what others have said, or produce the arguments we have found in them. Such a knowledge as this is but knowledge by hearsay, and the ostentation of it is at best but talking by rote, and very often upon weak and wrong principles. For all that is to be found in books is not built upon true foundations, nor always rightly deduced from the principles it is pretended to be built on. Such an examen as is requisite to discover that, every reader's mind is not forward to make; especially in those who have given themselves up to a party, and only hunt for what they can scrape together that may favour and support the tenets of it. Such men wilfully exclude themselves from truth, and from all true benefit to be received by reading. Others, of more indifferency, often want attention and industry. The mind is backward in itself to be at the pains to trace every argument to its original, and to see upon what basis it stands, and how firmly; but yet it is this that gives so much the advantage to one man more than another in reading.

The mind should, by severe rules, be tied down to this, at first uneasy, task; use and exercise will give it facility. So that those who are accustomed to it, readily, as it were with one cast of the eye, take a view of the argument, and presently, in most cases, see where it bottoms. Those who have got this faculty, one may say, have got the true key of books, and the clew to lead them through the mizmaze of variety of opinions and authors to truth and certainty. This young beginners should be entered in and showed the use of, that they might profit by their reading. Those who are strangers to it will be apt to think it too great a clog in the way of men's studies; and they will suspect they shall make but small progress if, in the books they read, they must stand to examine and unravel every argument, and follow it step by step up to its original.

I answer, this is a good objection, and ought to weigh with those whose reading is designed for much talk and little knowledge, and I have nothing to say to it. But I am here inquiring into the conduct of the understanding in its progress towards knowledge; and to those who aim at that, I may say, that he who fair and softly goes steadily forward in a course that points right, will sooner be at his journey's end than he that runs after every one he meets, though he gallop all day full speed.

To which let me add, that this way of thinking on, and profiting by what we read, will be a clog and rub to any one only in the beginning; when custom and exercise have made it familiar, it will be despatched, in the most occasions, without resting or interruption in the course of our reading. The motions and views of a mind exercised that way are wonderfully quick; and a man used to such sort of reflections sees as much at one glimpse as would require a long discourse to lay before another, and make out in an entire and gradual deduction. Besides, that when the first difficulties are over, the delight and sensible advantage it

brings mightily encourages and enlivens the mind in reading, which without this is very improperly called study. . . .

Particular matters of fact are the undoubted foundations on which our civil and natural knowledge is built: the benefit the understanding makes of them is, to draw from them conclusions which may be as standing rules of knowledge, and, consequently, of practice. The mind often makes not that benefit it should of the information it receives from the accounts of civil or natural historians, in being too forward or too slow in making observations on the particular facts recorded in them.

There are those who are very assiduous in reading, and yet do not much advance their knowledge by it. They are delighted with the stories that are told, and perhaps can tell them again, for they make all they read nothing but history to themselves; but not reflecting on it, not making to themselves observations from what they read, they are very little improved by all that crowd of particulars that either pass through or lodge themselves in their understandings. They dream on in a constant course of reading and cramming themselves, but, not digesting anything, it produces nothing but a heap of crudities.

If their memories retain well, one may say they have the materials of knowledge; but, like those for building, they are of no advantage if there be no other use made of them but to let them lie heaped up together. Opposite to these, there are others who lose the improvement they should make of matters of fact by a quite contrary conduct. They are apt to draw general conclusions and raise axioms from every particular they meet with. These make as little true benefit of history as the other; nay, being of forward and active spirits, receive more harm by it; it being of worse consequence to steer one's thoughts by a wrong rule than to have none at all; error doing to busy men much more harm than ignorance to the slow and sluggish. Between these, those

seem to do best who, taking material and useful hints, sometimes from single matters of fact, carry them in their minds to be judged of by what they shall find in history to confirm or reverse these imperfect observations, which may be established into rules fit to be relied on when they are justified by a sufficient and wary induction of particulars. He that makes no such reflections on what he reads, only loads his mind with a rhapsody of tales, fit in winter nights for the entertainment of others; and he that will improve every matter of fact into a maxim, will abound in contrary observations, that can be of no other use but to perplex and pudder him if he compares them, or else to misguide him if he gives himself up to the authority of that which for its novelty or some other fancy best pleases him.

OF STUDIES

By Francis Bacon

(So great has been the influence of Francis Bacon upon the minds of some readers of recent times that they have even attempted to credit him with the authorship of the plays usually ascribed to his great contemporary, Shakespeare. His keen and versatile mind ranged over the entire field of knowledge in his time and made significant contribution to it. The following essay, taken from *Essays, Civil and Moral*, is pithy and striking, though its formal antitheses and weighty rhythms may appear to us somewhat quaint.)

Studies serve for delight, for ornament, and for ability. Their chief use for delight is in privateness and retiring; for ornament, is in discourse; and for ability, is in the judgment and disposition of business; for expert men can execute, and perhaps judge of particulars, one by one: but the general counsels, and the plots and marshalling of affairs, come best from those that are learned. To spend too much time in studies is sloth; to use them too much for ornament is affectation; to make judgment wholly by their rules is the hu-

mour of a scholar; they perfect nature, and are perfected by experience; for natural abilities are like natural plants, that need pruning by study; and studies themselves do give forth directions too much at large, except they be bounded in by experience. Crafty men contemn studies, simple men admire them, and wise men use them; for they teach not their own use; but that is a wisdom without them, and above them, won by observation. Read not to contradict and confute, nor to believe and take for granted, nor to find talk and discourse, but to weigh and consider. Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested; that is, some books are to be read only in parts; others to be read, but not curiously; and some few to be read wholly, and with diligence and attention. Some books also may be read by deputy, and extracts made of them by others; but that would be only in the less important arguments and the meaner sort of books; else distilled books are, like common distilled waters, flashy things. Reading maketh a full man, conference a ready man, and writing an exact man; and therefore, if a man write little, he had need have a great memory; if he confer little, he had need have a present wit; and if he read little, he had need have much cunning, to seem to know what he doth not. Histories make men wise; poets witty; the mathematics, subtile; natural philosophy, deep; moral, grave; logic and rhetoric, able to contend: *Abeunt studia in mores*: nay, there is no stand or impediment in the wit but may be wrought out by fit studies: like as diseases of the body may have appropriate exercises; bowling is good for the stone and reins, shooting for the lungs and breast, gentle walking for the stomach, riding for the head, and the like; so, if a man's wits be wandering, let him study the mathematics; for in demonstrations, if his wit be called away never so little, he must begin again; if his wit be not apt to distinguish or find differences, let him study the schoolmen, for they are "*cym-*

ini sectores;" if he be not apt to beat over matters, and to call upon one thing to prove and illustrate another, let him study the lawyers' cases; so every defect of the mind may have a special receipt.

ON THINKING FOR ONESELF

By Arthur Schopenhauer

(Arthur Schopenhauer, 1788-1860, exercised a dominant and somewhat pessimistic influence on European thought during the middle of the nineteenth century. He was a brilliant writer, though lacking in originality, and his ideas leavened to an unusual extent the thinking of his own and the following generations. This essay is a challenge to the student who has a tendency to be too docile in the presence of a book. It may be well to contrast it with other like essays.)

The largest library in disorder is not so useful as a smaller but orderly one; in the same way the greatest amount of knowledge, if it has not been worked out in one's own mind, is of less value than a much smaller amount that has been fully considered. For it is only when a man combines what he knows from all sides, and compares one truth with another, that he completely realizes his own knowledge and gets it into his power. A man can only think over what he knows, therefore he should learn something; but a man only knows what he has pondered.

A man can apply himself of his own free will to reading and learning, while he cannot to thinking. Thinking must be kindled like a fire by a draught and sustained by some kind of interest in the subject. This interest may be either of a purely objective nature or it may be merely subjective. The latter exists in matters concerning us personally, but objective interest is only to be found in heads that think by nature, and to whom thinking is as natural as breathing; but they are very rare. This is why there is so little of it in most men of learning.

The difference between the effect that thinking for oneself

and that reading has on the mind is incredibly great; hence it is continually developing that original difference in minds which induces one man to think and another to read. Reading forces thoughts upon the mind which are as foreign and heterogeneous to the bent and mood in which it may be for the moment, as the seal is to the wax on which it stamps its imprint. The mind thus suffers total compulsion from without; it has first this and first that to think about, for which it has at the time neither instinct nor liking.

On the other hand, when a man thinks for himself he follows his own impulse, which either his external surroundings or some kind of recollection has determined at the moment. His visible surroundings do not leave upon his mind *one* single definite thought as reading does, but merely supply him with material and occasion to think over what is in keeping with his nature and present mood. This is why *much* reading robs the mind of all elasticity; it is like keeping a spring under a continuous, heavy weight. If a man does not want to think, the safest plan is to take up a book directly he has a spare moment.

This practice accounts for the fact that learning makes most men more stupid and foolish than they are by nature, and prevents their writings from being a success; they remain, as Pope has said,

"For ever reading, never to be read."—*Dunciad*, iii. 194.

Men of learning are those who have read the contents of books. Thinkers, geniuses, and those who have enlightened the world and furthered the race of men, are those who have made direct use of the book of the world.

Indeed, it is only a man's own fundamental thoughts that have truth and life in them. For it is these that he really and completely understands. To read the thoughts of others is like taking the remains of some one else's meal, like putting on the discarded clothes of a stranger.

The thought we read is related to the thought which rises in us, as the fossilized impress of a prehistoric plant is to a plant budding out in spring.

Reading is merely a substitute for one's own thoughts. A man allows his thoughts to be put into leading-strings.

Further, many books serve only to show how many wrong paths there are, and how widely a man may stray if he allows himself to be led by them. But he who is guided by his genius, that is to say, he who thinks for himself, who thinks voluntarily and rightly, possesses the compass wherewith to find the right course. A man, therefore, should only read when the source of his own thoughts stagnates; which is often the case with the best of minds.

It is sin against the Holy Spirit to frighten away one's own original thoughts by taking up a book. It is the same as a man flying from Nature to look at a museum of dried plants, or to study a beautiful landscape in copperplate. A man at times arrives at a truth or an idea after spending much time in thinking it out for himself, linking together his various thoughts, when he might have found the same thing in a book; it is a hundred times more valuable if he has acquired it by thinking it out for himself. For it is only by his thinking it out for himself that it enters as an integral part, as a living member into the whole system of his thought, and stands in complete and firm relation with it; that it is fundamentally understood with all its consequences, and carries the color, the shade, the impress of his own way of thinking; and comes at the very moment, just as the necessity for it is felt, and stands fast and cannot be forgotten. This is the perfect application, nay, interpretation of Goethe's

"Was du ererbt von deinen Vätern hast
Erwirb es um es zu besitzen."[2]

[2] What you have inherited from your fathers, earn it in order to possess it.

The man who thinks for himself learns the authorities for his opinions only later on, when they serve merely to strengthen both them and himself; while the book-philosopher starts from the authorities and other people's opinions, therefrom constructing a whole for himself; so that he resembles an automaton, whose composition we do not understand. The other man, the man who thinks for himself, on the other hand, is like a living man as made by nature. His mind is impregnated from without, which then bears and brings forth its child. Truth that has been merely learned adheres to us like an artificial limb, a false tooth, a waxen nose, or at best like one made out of another's flesh; truth which is acquired by thinking for oneself is like a natural member: it alone really belongs to us. Here we touch upon the difference between the thinking man and the mere man of learning. Therefore the intellectual acquirements of the man who thinks for himself are like a fine painting that stands out full of life, that has its light and shade correct, the tone sustained, and perfect harmony of color. The intellectual attainments of the merely learned man, on the contrary, resemble a big palette covered with every color, at most systematically arranged, but without harmony, relation, and meaning.

Reading is thinking with some one else's head instead of one's own. But to think for oneself is to endeavor to develop a coherent whole, a system, even if it is not a strictly complete one. Nothing is more harmful than, by dint of continual reading, to strengthen the current of other people's thoughts. These thoughts, springing from different minds, belonging to different systems, bearing different colors, never flow together of themselves into a unity of thought, knowledge, insight, or conviction, but rather cram the head with a Babylonian confusion of tongues; consequently the mind becomes overcharged with them and is deprived of all clear insight and almost disorganized. This condition of things

may often be discerned in many men of learning, and it makes them inferior in sound understanding, correct judgment, and practical tact to many illiterate men, who, by the aid of experience, conversation, and a little reading, have acquired a little knowledge from without and made it always subordinate to and incorporated it with their own thoughts.

The scientific *thinker* also does this to a much greater extent. Although he requires much knowledge and must read a great deal, his mind is nevertheless strong enough to overcome it all, to assimilate it, to incorporate it with the system of his thoughts, and to subordinate it to the organic relative unity of his insight, which is vast and evergrowing. By this means his own thought, like the bass in an organ, always takes the lead in everything and is never deadened by other sounds, as is the case with purely antiquarian minds; where all sorts of musical passages, as it were, run into each other, and the fundamental tone is entirely lost.

The people who have spent their lives in reading and acquired their wisdom out of books resemble those who have acquired exact information of a country from the descriptions of many travellers. These people can relate a great deal about many things; but at heart they have no connected, clear, sound knowledge of the condition of the country. While those who have spent their life in thinking are like the people who have been to that country themselves; they alone really know what it is they are saying, know the subject in its entirety, and are quite at home in it.

The ordinary book-philosopher stands in the same relation to a man who thinks for himself as an eye-witness does to the historian; he speaks from his own direct comprehension of the subject.

Therefore all who think for themselves hold at bottom much the same views; when they differ it is because they hold different points of view, but when these do not alter the matter they all say the same thing. They merely ex-

press what they have grasped from an objective point of view. I have frequently hesitated to give passages to the public because of their paradoxical nature, and afterwards to my joyful surprise have found the same thoughts expressed in the works of great men of long ago.

The book-philosopher, on the other hand, relates what one man has said and another man meant, and what a third has objected to, and so on. He compares, weighs, criticizes, and endeavors to get at the truth of the thing, and in this way resembles the critical historian. For instance, he will try to find out whether Leibnitz was not for some time in his life a follower of Spinoza, etc. The curious student will find striking examples of what I mean in Herbart's "Analytical Elucidation of Morality and Natural Right," and in his "Letters on Freedom." It surprises us that such a man should give himself so much trouble; for it is evident that if he had fixed his attention on the matter he would soon have attained his object by thinking a little for himself.

But there is a small difficulty to overcome; a thing of this kind does not depend upon our own will. One can sit down at any time and read, but not—think. It is with thoughts as with men: we cannot always summon them at pleasure, but must wait until they come. Thought about a subject must come of its own accord by a happy and harmonious union of external motive with mental temper and application; and it is precisely that which never seems to come to these people.

One has an illustration of this in matters that concern our personal interest. If we have to come to a decision on a thing of this kind we cannot sit down at any particular moment and thrash out the reasons and arrive at a decision; for often at such a time our thoughts cannot be fixed, but will wander off to other things; a dislike to the subject is sometimes responsible for this. We should not use force, but wait until the mood appears of itself; it frequently comes

unexpectedly and even repeats itself; the different moods which possess us at the different times throwing another light on the matter. It is this long process which is understood by a *ripe resolution*. For the task of making up our mind must be distributed; much that has been previously overlooked occurs to us; the aversion also disappears, for, after examining the matter closer, it seems much more tolerable than it was at first sight.

And in theory it is just the same: a man must wait for the right moment; even the greatest mind is not always able to think for itself at all times. Therefore it is advisable for it to use its spare moments in reading, which, as has been said, is a substitute for one's own thought; in this way material is imported to the mind by letting another think for us, although it is always in a way which is different from our own. For this reason a man should not read too much, in order that his mind does not become accustomed to the substitute, and consequently even forget the matter in question; that it may not get used to walking in paths that have already been trodden, and by following a foreign course of thought forget its own. Least of all should a man for the sake of reading entirely withdraw his attention from the real world: as the impulse and temper which lead one to think for oneself proceed oftener from it than from reading; for it is the visible and real world in its primitiveness and strength that is the natural subject of the thinking mind, and is able more easily than anything else to rouse it. After these considerations it will not surprise us to find that the thinking man can easily be distinguished from the book-philosopher by his marked earnestness, directness, and originality, the personal conviction of all his thoughts and expressions: the book-philosopher, on the other hand, has everything second-hand; his ideas are like a collection of old rags obtained anyhow; he is dull and pointless, resembling a copy of a copy. His style, which is full of conventional,

nay, vulgar phrases and current terms, resembles a small state where there is a circulation of foreign money because it coins none of its own.

Mere experience can as little as reading take the place of thought. Mere empiricism bears the same relation to thinking as eating to digestion and assimilation. When experience boasts that it alone, by its discoveries, has advanced human knowledge, it is as though the mouth boasted that it was its work alone to maintain the body.

The works of all really capable minds are distinguished from all other works by a character of decision and definiteness, and, in consequence, of lucidity and clearness. This is because minds like these know definitely and clearly what they wish to express—whether it be in prose, in verse, or in music. Other minds are wanting in this decision and clearness, and therefore may be instantly recognized.

The characteristic sign of a mind of the highest standard is the directness of its judgment. Everything it utters is the result of thinking for itself; this is shown everywhere in the way it gives expression to its thoughts. Therefore it is, like a prince, an imperial director in the realm of intellect. All other minds are mere delegates, as may be seen by their style, which has no stamp of its own.

Hence every true thinker for himself is so far like a monarch; he is absolute, and recognizes nobody above him. His judgments, like the decrees of a monarch, spring from his own sovereign power and proceed directly from himself. He takes as little notice of authority as a monarch does of a command; nothing is valid unless he has himself authorized it. On the other hand, those of vulgar minds, who are swayed by all kinds of current opinions, authorities, and prejudices, are like the people which in silence obey the law and commands.

The people who are so eager and impatient to settle disputed questions, by bringing forward authorities, are really

glad when they can place the understanding and insight of some one else in the field in place of their own, which are deficient. Their number is legion. For, as Seneca says, *"Unusquisque mavult credere, quam judicare."*[3]

The weapon they commonly use in their controversies is that of authorities: they strike each other with it, and whoever is drawn into the fray will do well not to defend himself with reason and arguments; for against a weapon of this kind they are like horned Siegfrieds, immersed in a flood of incapacity for thinking and judging. They will bring forward their authorities as an *argumentum ad verecundiam*[4] and then cry *victoria.*

In the realm of reality, however fair, happy, and pleasant it may prove to be, we always move controlled by the law of gravity, which we must be unceasingly overcoming. While in the realm of thought we are disembodied spirits, uncontrolled by the law of gravity and free from penury.

This is why there is no happiness on earth like that which at the propitious moment a fine and fruitful mind finds in itself.

The presence of a thought is like the presence of our beloved. We imagine we shall never forget this thought, and that this loved one could never be indifferent to us. But out of sight out of mind! The finest thought runs the risk of being irrevocably forgotten if it is not written down, and the dear one of being forsaken if we do not marry her.

There are many thoughts which are valuable to the man who thinks them; but out of them only a few which possess strength to produce either repercussion or reflex action, that is, to win the reader's sympathy after they have been written down. It is what a man has thought out directly *for himself* that alone has true value. Thinkers may be classed as follows: those who, in the first place, think for them-

[3] Every one prefers to take on faith, rather than to examine judicially.

[4] Appeal from authority.

selves, and those who think directly for others. The former thinkers are the genuine, *they think for themselves* in both senses of the word; they are the true *philosophers*; they alone are in earnest. Moreover, the enjoyment and happiness of their existence consist in thinking. The others are the *sophists*; they wish to *seem*, and seek their happiness in what they hope to get from other people; their earnestness consists in this. To which of these two classes a man belongs is soon seen by his whole method and manner. Lichtenberg is an example of the first class, while Herder obviously belongs to the second.

When one considers how great and how close to us the *problem of existence* is,—this equivocal, tormented, fleeting, dream-like existence—so great and so close that as soon as one perceives it, it overshadows and conceals all other problems and aims;—and when one sees how all men—with a few and rare exceptions—are not clearly conscious of the problem, nay, do not even seem to see it, but trouble themselves about everything else rather than this, and live on taking thought only for the present day and the scarcely longer span of their own personal future, while they either expressly give the problem up or are ready to agree with it, by the aid of some system of popular metaphysics, and are satisfied with this;—when one, I say, reflects upon this, so may one be of the opinion that man is a *thinking being* only in a very remote sense, and not feel any special surprise at any trait of thoughtlessness or folly; but know, rather, that the intellectual outlook of the normal man indeed surpasses that of the brute,—whose whole existence resembles a continual present without any consciousness of the future or the past—but not to such an extent as one is wont to suppose.

And corresponding to this, we find in the conversation of most men that their thoughts are cut up as small as chaff, making it impossible for them to spin out the thread of

their discourse to any length. If this world were peopled by really thinking beings, noise of every kind would not be so universally tolerated, as indeed the most horrible and aimless form of it is. If Nature had intended man to think she would not have given him ears, or, at any rate, she would have furnished them with airtight flaps like the bat, which for this reason is to be envied. But, in truth, man is like the rest, a poor animal, whose powers are calculated only to maintain him during his existence; therefore he requires to have his ears always open to announce of themselves, by night as by day, the approach of the pursuer.

"OF KINGS' TREASURES"

By John Ruskin

(This essay is taken from *Sesame and Lilies*, a book which used to be read much more widely than at present. It is regrettable that writing which has been the inspiration of so many young minds should fall into neglect. The author, John Ruskin, was one of the most influential writers which middle nineteenth century England produced. Modern criticism and the passing years have tended to diminish the significance of many of his social and esthetic theories, but it is nevertheless true that his was one of the most useful minds in his generation in the lift which it gave to the general level of culture.)

"You shall each have a cake of sesame,—and ten pound."
—Lucian, *The Fisherman*

1. My first duty this evening is to ask your pardon for the ambiguity of title under which the subject of this lecture has been announced: for indeed I am not going to talk of kings, known as regnant, nor of treasuries, understood to contain wealth; but of quite another order of royalty, and another material of riches, than those usually acknowledged. I had even intended to ask your attention for a little while on trust, and (as sometimes one contrives, in taking a friend

to see a favorite piece of scenery) to hide what I wanted most to show, with such imperfect cunning as I might, until we unexpectedly reached the best point of view by winding paths. But—and as also I have heard it said, by men practiced in public address, that hearers are never so much fatigued as by the endeavor to follow a speaker who gives them no clue to his purposes,—I will take the slight mask off at once, and tell you plainly that I want to speak to you about the treasures hidden in books; and about the way we find them, and the way we lose them. A grave subject, you will say; and a wide one! Yes; so wide that I shall make no effort to touch the compass of it. I will try only to bring before you a few simple thoughts about reading, which press themselves upon me every day more deeply, as I watch the course of the public mind with respect to our daily enlarging means of education; and the answeringly wider spreading on the levels, of the irrigation of literature.

2. It happens that I have practically some connection with schools for different classes of youth; and I receive many letters from parents respecting the education of their children. In the mass of these letters I am always struck by the precedence which the idea of a "position in life" takes above all other thoughts in the parents'—more especially in the mothers'—minds. "The education befitting such and such a *station in life*"—this is the phrase, this the object, always. They never seek, as far as I can make out, an education good in itself; even the conception of abstract rightness in training rarely seems reached by the writers. But, an education "which shall keep a good coat on my son's back;—which shall enable him to ring with confidence the visitors' bell at double-belled doors; which shall result ultimately in establishment of a double-belled door to his own house;—in a word, which shall lead to 'advancement in life';—*this* we pray for on bent knees—and this is *all* we pray for." It never seems to occur to the parents that there

may be an education which, in itself, *is* advancement in Life; —that any other than that may perhaps be advancement in Death; and that this essential education might be more easily got, or given, than they fancy, if they set about it in the right way; while it is for no price, and by no favor, to be got, if they set about it in the wrong.

3. Indeed, among the ideas most prevalent and effective in the mind of this busiest of countries, I suppose the first— at least that which is confessed with the greatest frankness, and put forward as the fittest stimulus to youthful exertion —is this of "Advancement in life." May I ask you to consider with me what this idea practically includes, and what it should include?

Practically, then, at present, "advancement in life" means, becoming conspicuous in life;—obtaining a position which shall be acknowledged by others to be respectable or honorable. We do not understand by this advancement, in general, the mere making of money, but the being known to have made it; not the accomplishment of any great aim, but the being seen to have accomplished it. In a word, we mean the gratification of our thirst for applause. That thirst, if the last infirmity of noble minds, is also the first infirmity of weak ones; and, on the whole, the strongest impulsive influence of average humanity: the greatest efforts of the race have always been traceable to the love of praise, as its greatest catastrophes to the love of pleasure.

4. I am not about to attack or defend this impulse. I want you only to feel how it lies at the root of effort; especially of all modern effort. It is the gratification of vanity which is, with us, the stimulus of toil, and balm of repose; so closely does it touch the very springs of life that the wounding of our vanity is always spoken of (and truly) as in its measure *mortal*; we call it "mortification," using the same expression which we should apply to a gangrenous and

incurable bodily hurt. And although few of us may be physicians enough to recognize the various effect of this passion upon health and energy, I believe most honest men know, and would at once acknowledge, its leading power with them as a motive. The seaman does not commonly desire to be made captain only because he knows he can manage the ship better than any other sailor on board. He wants to be made captain that he may be *called* captain. The clergyman does not usually want to be made a bishop only because he believes no other hand can, as firmly as his, direct the diocese through its difficulties. He wants to be made bishop primarily that he may be called "My Lord." And a prince does not usually desire to enlarge, or a subject to gain, a kingdom, because he believes that no one else can as well serve the State, upon its throne; but, briefly, because he wishes to be addressed as "Your Majesty," by as many lips as may be brought to such utterance.

5. This, then, being the main idea of "advancement in life," the force of it applies, for all of us, according to our station, particularly to that secondary result of such advancement which we call "getting into good society." We want to get into good society, not that we may have it, but that we may be seen in it; and our notion of its goodness depends primarily on its conspicuousness.

Will you pardon me if I pause for a moment to put what I fear you may think an impertinent question? I never can go on with an address unless I feel, or know, that my audience are either with me or against me: I do not much care which, in beginning; but I must know where they are; and I would fain find out, at this instant, whether you think I am putting the motives of popular action too low. I am resolved, tonight, to state them low enough to be admitted as probable; for whenever, in my writings on Political Economy, I assume that a little honesty, or generosity—or what used to be called "virtue"—may be calculated upon as a

human motive of action, people always answer me, saying, "You must not calculate on that: that is not in human nature: you must not assume anything to be common to men but acquisitiveness and jealousy; no other feeling ever has influence on them, except accidentally, and in matters out of the way of business." I begin, accordingly, tonight low in the scale of motives; but I must know if you think me right in doing so. Therefore, let me ask those who admit the love of praise to be usually the strongest motive in men's minds in seeking advancement, and the honest desire of doing any kind of duty to be an entirely secondary one, to hold up their hands. (*About a dozen of hands held up —the audience, partly, not being sure the lecturer is serious, and, partly, shy of expressing opinion.*) I am quite serious —I really do want to know what you think; however, I can judge by putting the reverse question. Will those who think that duty is generally the first, and love of praise the second, motive, hold up their hands? (*One hand reported to have been held up, behind the lecturer.*) Very good; I see you are with me, and that you think I have not begun too near the ground. Now, without teasing you by putting farther question, I venture to assume that you will admit duty as at least a secondary or tertiary motive. You think that the desire of doing something useful, or obtaining some real good, is indeed an existent collateral idea, though a secondary one, in most men's desire of advancement. You will grant that moderately honest men desire place and office, at least in some measure, for the sake of beneficent power; and would wish to associate rather with sensible and well-informed persons than with fools and ignorant persons, whether they are seen in the company of the sensible ones or not. And finally, without being troubled by repetition of any common truisms about the preciousness of friends, and the influence of companions, you will admit, doubtless, that according to the sincerity of our desire that our friends may be true, and our

companions wise,—and in proportion to the earnestness and discretion with which we choose both,—will be the general chances of our happiness and usefulness.

6. But, granting that we had both the will and the sense to choose our friends well, how few of us have the power! or, at least, how limited, for most, is the sphere of choice! Nearly all our associations are determined by chance, or necessity; and restricted within a narrow circle. We cannot know whom we would; and those whom we know, we cannot have at our side when we most need them. All the higher circles of human intelligence are, to those beneath, only momentarily and partially open. We may, by good fortune, obtain a glimpse of a great poet, and hear the sound of his voice; or put a question to a man of science, and be answered good-humoredly. We may intrude ten minutes' talk on a cabinet minister, answered probably with words worse than silence, being deceptive; or snatch, once or twice in our lives, the privilege of throwing a bouquet in the path of a Princess, or arresting the kind glance of a Queen. And yet these momentary chances we covet; and spend our years, and passions, and powers in pursuit of little more than these; while, meantime, there is a society continually open to us, of people who will talk to us as long as we like, whatever our rank or occupation;—talk to us in the best words they can choose, and of the things nearest their hearts. And this society, because it is so numerous and so gentle, and can be kept waiting round us all day long,—kings and statesmen lingering patiently, not to grant audience, but to gain it!—in those plainly furnished and narrow anterooms, our bookcase shelves,—we make no account of that company,—perhaps never listen to a word they would say, all day long!

7. You may tell me, perhaps, or think within yourselves that the apathy with which we regard this company of the noble, who are praying us to listen to them; and the passion

with which we pursue the company, probably of the ignoble, who despise us, or who have nothing to teach us, are grounded in this,—that we can see the faces of the living men, and it is themselves, and not their sayings, with which we desire to become familiar. But it is not so. Suppose you never were to see their faces;—suppose you could be put behind a screen in the statesman's cabinet, or the prince's chamber, would you not be glad to listen to their words, though you were forbidden to advance beyond the screen? And when the screen is only a little less, folded in two instead of four, and you can be hidden behind the cover of the two boards that bind a book, and listen all day long, not to the casual talk, but to the studied, determined, chosen addresses of the wisest of men;—this station of audience, and honorable privy council, you despise!

8. But perhaps you will say that it is because the living people talk of things that are passing, and are of immediate interest to you, that you desire to hear them. Nay; that cannot be so, for the living people will themselves tell you about passing matters, much better in their writings than in their careless talk. But I admit that this motive does influence you, so far as you prefer those rapid and ephemeral writings to slow and enduring writings,—books, properly so called. For all books are divisible into two classes, the books of the hour, and the books of all time. Mark this distinction—it is not one of quality only. It is not merely the bad book that does not last, and the good one that does. It is a distinction of species. There are good books for the hour, and good ones for all time; bad books for the hour, and bad ones for all time. I must define the two kinds before I go farther.

9. The good book of the hour, then,—I do not speak of the bad ones,—is simply the useful or pleasant talk of some person whom you cannot otherwise converse with, printed

for you. Very useful often, telling you what you need to know; very pleasant often, as a sensible friend's present talk would be. These bright accounts of travels; good-humored and witty discussions of question; lively or pathetic story-telling in the form of novel; firm fact-telling, by the real agents concerned in the events of passing history;—all these books of the hour, multiplying among us as education becomes more general, are a peculiar possession of the present age; we ought to be entirely thankful for them, and entirely ashamed of ourselves if we make no good use of them. But we make the worst possible use if we allow them to usurp the place of true books: for, strictly speaking, they are not books at all, but merely letters or newspapers in good print. Our friend's letter may be delightful, or necessary, to-day: whether worth keeping or not, is to be considered. The newspaper may be entirely proper at breakfast time, but assuredly it is not reading for all day. So, though bound up in a volume, the long letter which gives you so pleasant an account of the inns, and roads, and weather last year at such a place, or which tells you that amusing story, or gives you the real circumstances of such and such events, however valuable for occasional reference, may not be, in the real sense of the word, a "book" at all, nor, in the real sense, to be "read." A book is essentially not a talked thing, but a written thing; and written, not with the view of mere communication, but of permanence. The book of talk is printed only because its author cannot speak to thousands of people at once; if he could, he would—the volume is mere *multiplication* of his voice. You cannot talk to your friend in India; if you could, you would; you write instead: that is mere *conveyance* of voice. But a book is written, not to multiply the voice merely, not to carry it merely, but to perpetuate it. The author has something to say which he perceives to be true and useful, or helpfully beautiful. So far as he knows no one has yet said it; so far as he knows,

no one else can say it. He is bound to say it, clearly and melodiously if he may; clearly, at all events. In the sum of his life he finds this to be the thing, or group of things, manifest to him;—this, the piece of true knowledge, or sight, which his share of sunshine and earth has permitted him to seize. He would fain set it down forever; engrave it on rock, if he could; saying, "This is the best of me; for the rest, I ate, and drank, and slept, loved, and hated, like another; my life was as the vapor, and is not; but this I saw and knew: this, if anything of mine, is worth your memory." That is his "writing"; it is, in his small human way, and with whatever degree of true inspiration is in him, his inscription, or scripture. That is a "Book."

10. Perhaps you think no books were ever so written. But, again, I ask you, do you at all believe in honesty, or at all in kindness? or do you think there is never any honesty or benevolence in wise people? None of us, I hope, are so unhappy as to think that. Well, whatever bit of a wise man's book is honestly and benevolently done, that bit is his book, or his piece of art. It is mixed always with evil fragments—ill done, redundant, affected work. But if you read rightly, you will easily discover the true bits, and those *are* the book.

11. Now books of this kind have been written in all ages by their greatest men:—by great readers, great statesmen, and great thinkers. These are all at your choice; and Life is short. You have heard as much before;—yet have you measured and mapped out this short life and its possibilities? Do you know, if you read this, that you cannot read that—that what you lose today you cannot gain tomorrow? Will you go and gossip with your housemaid, or your stable-boy, when you may talk with queens and kings; or flatter yourselves that it is with any worthy consciousness of your own claims to respect that you jostle with the hungry and com-

mon crowd for *entrée* here, and audience there, when all the while this eternal court is open to you, with its society, wide as the world, multitudinous as its days, the chosen, and the mighty, of every place and time? Into that you may enter always; in that you may take fellowship and rank according to your wish; from that, once entered into it, you can never be an outcast but by your own fault; by your aristocracy of companionship there, your own inherent aristocracy will be assuredly tested and the motives with which you strive to take high place in the society of the living, measured, as to all the truth and sincerity that are in them, by the place you desire to take in this company of the Dead.

12. "The place you desire," and the place you *fit yourself for*, I must also say; because, observe, this court of the past differs from all living aristocracy in this:—it is open to labor and to merit, but to nothing else. No wealth will bribe, no name overawe, no artifice deceive, the guardian of those Elysian gates. In the deep sense, no vile or vulgar person ever enters there. At the portieres of that silent Faubourg St. Germain, there is but brief question, "Do you deserve to enter? Pass. Do you ask to be the companion of nobles? Make yourself noble, and you shall be. Do you long for the conversation of the wise? Learn to understand it, and you shall hear it. But on other terms? No. If you will not rise to us, we cannot stoop to you. The living lord may assume courtesy, the living philosopher explain his thought to you with considerate pain; but here we neither feign nor interpret; you must rise to the level of our thoughts if you would be gladdened by them, and share our feelings, if you would recognize our presence."

13. This, then, is what you have to do, and I admit that it is much. You must, in a word, love these people, if you are to be among them. No ambition is of any use. They

scorn your ambition. You must love them, and show your love in these two following ways:

(1).—First, by a true desire to be taught by them, and to enter into their thoughts. To enter into theirs, observe; not to find your own expressed by them. If the person who wrote the book is not wiser than you, you need not read it; if he be, he will think differently from you in many respects.

(2).—Very ready we are to say of a book, "How good this is—that's exactly what I think!" But the right feeling is, "How strange that is! I never thought of that before, and yet I see it is true; or if I do not now, I hope I shall, some day." But whether thus submissively, or not, at least be sure that you go to the author to get at *his* meaning, not to find yours. Judge it afterwards, if you think yourself qualified to do so; but ascertain it first. And be sure also, if the author is worth anything, that you will not get at his meaning all at once;—nay, that at his whole meaning you will not for a long time arrive in any wise. Not that he does not say what he means, and in strong words, too; but he cannot say it all; and what is more strange, *will* not, but in a hidden way and in parables, in order that he may be sure you want it. I cannot quite see the reason of this, nor analyze that cruel reticence in the breasts of wise men which makes them always hide their deeper thought. They do not give it you by way of help, but of reward; and will make themselves sure that you deserve it before they allow you to reach it. But it is the same with the physical type of wisdom, gold. There seems, to you and me, no reason why the electric forces of the earth should not carry whatever there is of gold within it at once to the mountain tops, so that kings and people might know that all the gold they could get was there; and without any trouble of digging, or anxiety, or chance, or waste of time, cut it away, and coin as much as they needed. But Nature does not manage it so. She puts it in little

fissures in the earth, nobody knows where: you may dig long and find none; you must dig painfully to find any.

14. And it is just the same with men's best wisdom. When you come to a good book, you must ask yourself, "Am I inclined to work as an Australian miner would? Are my pickaxes and shovels in good order, and am I in good trim myself, my sleeves well up to the elbow, and my breath good, and my temper?" And, keeping the figure a little longer, even at cost of tiresomeness, for it is a thoroughly useful one, the metal you are in search of being the author's mind or meaning, his words are as the rock which you have to crush and smelt in order to get at it. And your pickaxes are your own care, wit, and learning; your smelting-furnace is your own thoughtful soul. Do not hope to get any good author's meaning without those tools and that fire; often you will need sharpest, finest chiseling, and patientest fusing, before you can gather one grain of the metal.

15. And therefore, first of all, I tell you, earnestly and authoritatively (*I know* I am right in this), you must get into the habit of looking intensely at words, and assuring yourself of their meaning, syllable by syllable—nay letter by letter. For though it is only by reason of the opposition of letters in the function of signs, to sounds in the function of signs, that the study of books is called "literature," and that a man versed in it is called, by the consent of nations, a man of letters instead of a man of books, or of words, you may yet connect with that accidental nomenclature this real fact;—that you might read all the books in the British Museum (if you could live long enough) and remain an utterly "illiterate," uneducated person; but that if you read ten pages of a good book, letter by letter,—that is to say, with real accuracy,—you are forevermore in some measure an educated person. The entire difference between education and non-education (as regards the merely intellectual part of it) con-

sists in this accuracy. A well-educated gentleman may not know many languages,—may not be able to speak any but his own,—may have read very few books. But whatever language he knows, he knows precisely; whatever word he pronounces, he pronounces rightly; above all, he is learned in the *peerage* of words; knows the words of true descent and ancient blood at a glance, from words of modern *canaille*; remembers all their ancestry, their intermarriages, distant relationships, and the extent to which they were admitted, and offices they held, among the national *noblesse* of words at any time, and in any country. But an uneducated person may know, by memory, many languages, and talk them all, and yet truly know not a word of any,—not a word even of his own. An ordinarily clever and sensible seaman will be able to make his way ashore at most ports; yet he has only to speak a sentence of any language to be known for an illiterate person: so also the accent, or turn of expression of a single sentence, will at once mark a scholar. And this is so strongly felt, so conclusively admitted by educated persons, that a false accent or a mistaken syllable is enough, in the parliament of any civilized nation, to assign to a man a certain degree of inferior standing forever.

16. And this is right; but it is a pity that the accuracy insisted on is not greater, and required to a serious purpose. It is right that a false Latin quantity should excite a smile in the House of Commons; but it is wrong that a false English *meaning* should *not* excite a frown there. Let the accent of words be watched; and closely: let their meaning be watched more closely still, and fewer will do the work. A few words well chosen and distinguished, will do work that a thousand cannot, when every one is acting, equivocally, in the function of another. Yes; and words, if they are not watched, will do deadly work sometimes. There are masked words droning and skulking about us in Europe just now,—

(there never were so many, owing to the spread of a shallow, blotching, blundering, infectious "information," or rather deformation, everywhere, and to the teaching of catechisms and phrases at schools instead of human meanings)—there are masked words abroad, I say, which nobody understands, but which everybody uses, and most people will also fight for, live for, or even die for, fancying they mean this or that, or the other, of things dear to them: for such words wear chameleon cloaks—"ground-lion" cloaks, of the color of the ground of any man's fancy: on that ground they lie in wait, and rend them with a spring from it. There never were creatures of prey so mischievous, never diplomatists so cunning, never poisoners so deadly, as these masked words; they are the unjust stewards of all men's ideas: whatever fancy or favorite instinct a man most cherishes, he gives to his favorite masked word to take care of for him; the word at last comes to have an infinite power over him,—you cannot get at him but by its ministry.

17. And in languages so mongrel in breed as the English, there is a fatal power of equivocation put into men's hands, almost whether they will or no, in being able to use Greek or Latin words for an idea when they want it to be awful; and Saxon or otherwise common words when they want it to be vulgar. What a singular and salutary effect, for instance, would be produced on the minds of people who are in the habit of taking the Form of the "Word" they live by, for the Power of which that Word tells them, if we always either retained, or refused, the Greek form "biblos," or "biblion," as the right expression for "book"—instead of employing it only in the one instance in which we wish to give dignity to the idea, and translating it into English everywhere else. How wholesome it would be for many simple persons, if, in such places (for instance) as Acts xix. 19, we retained the Greek expression, instead of translating it, and they had to

read—"Many of them also which used curious arts, brought their bibles together, and burnt them before all men; and they counted the price of them, and found it to be fifty thousand pieces of silver!" Or if, on the other hand, we translated where we retain it, and always spoke of "The Holy Book," instead of "Holy Bible," it might come into more heads than it does at present, that the Word of God, by which the heavens were, of old, and by which they are now kept in store, cannot be made a present of to anybody in morocco binding; nor sown on any wayside by help either of steam plough or steam press; but is nevertheless being offered to us daily, and by us with contumely refused; and sown in us daily, and by us, as instantly as may be, choked.

18. So, again, consider what effect has been produced on the English vulgar mind by the use of the sonorous Latin form "Damno," in translating the Greek κατακρίνω when people charitably wish to make it forcible; and the substitution of the temperate "condemn" for it, when they choose to keep it gentle; and what notable sermons have been preached by illiterate clergymen on—"He that believeth not shall be damned"; though they would shrink with horror from translating Heb. xi. 7, "The saving of his house, by which he damned the world"; or John viii. 10, 11, "Woman, hath no man damned thee? She saith, No man, Lord. Jesus answered her, Neither do I damn thee; go and sin no more." The divisions in the mind of Europe, which have cost seas of blood and in the defence of which the noblest souls of men have been cast away in frantic desolation, countless as forest leaves—though, in the heart of them, founded on deeper causes—have nevertheless been rendered practicably possible, mainly, by the European adoption of the Greek word for a public meeting, "ecclesia," to give peculiar respectability to such meetings, when held for religious purposes; and other collateral equivocations, such as

the vulgar English one of using the word "priest" as a contraction for "presbyter."

19. Now, in order to deal with words rightly, this is the habit you must form. Nearly every word in your language has been first a word of some other language—of Saxon, German, French, Latin, or Greek (not to speak of eastern and primitive dialects). And many words have been all these;—that is to say, have been Greek first, Latin next, French or German next, and English last: undergoing a certain change of sense and use on the lips of each nation; but retaining a deep vital meaning, which all good scholars feel in employing them, even at this day. If you do not know the Greek alphabet, learn it; young or old—girl or boy—whoever you may be, if you think of reading seriously (which, of course, implies that you have some leisure at command), learn your Greek alphabet; then get good dictionaries of all these languages, and whenever you are in doubt about a word, hunt it down patiently. Read Max Müller's lectures thoroughly, to begin with; and, after that, never let a word escape you that looks suspicious. It is severe work; but you will find it, even at first, interesting, and at last, endlessly amusing. And the general gain to your character, in power and precision, will be quite incalculable.

Mind, this does not imply knowing, or trying to know, Greek or Latin, or French. It takes a whole life to learn any language perfectly. But you can easily ascertain the meanings through which the English word has passed; and those which in a good writer's work it must still bear.

PART II

THE LANGUAGE

HER WORDS*

My mother has the prettiest tricks
  Of words and words and words.
Her talk comes out as smooth and sleek
  As breasts of singing birds.

She shapes her speech all silver fine
  Because she loves it so.
And her own eyes begin to shine
  To hear her stories grow.

And if she goes to make a call
  Or out to take a walk,
We leave our work when she returns
  And run to hear her talk.

We had not dreamed these things were so
  Of sorrow and of mirth.
Her speech is as a thousand eyes
  Through which we see the earth.

God wove a web of loveliness,
  Of clouds and stars and birds,
But made not any thing at all
  So beautiful as words.

They shine around our simple earth
  With golden shadowings,
And every common thing they touch
  Is exquisite with wings.

There's nothing poor and nothing small
  But is made fair with them.
They are the hands of living faith
  That touch the garment's hem.

They are as fair as bloom or air,
  They shine like any star,
And I am rich who learned from her
  How beautiful they are.

—Anna Hempstead Branch

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CHAPTER 3

LANGUAGE AND THINKING

They dwelt
In hollow holes, like swarms of tiny ants,
In sunless depths of caverns; and they had
No certain signs of winter, nor of spring
Flower-laden, nor of summer with her fruits;
But without counsel fared their whole life long.
. . . . . And I
Found Number for them, chief device of all,
Groupings of letters, Memory's handmaid that,
And Mother of the Muses.

—ÆSCHYLUS, *Prometheus Bound*

Many students who come to college are delightfully skeptical of the values to be had from the study of "English." Their skepticism is well founded if their study of their native tongue in the elementary and high schools has consisted mostly in the writing of "themes," and the learning of the rules of grammar and punctuation. The student who is questioning the values of the work he is asked to do in the classroom is following the advice of Percy Marks and James Harvey Robinson in the extracts quoted in Chapter 1, though he may never have read that advice before entering this class. He is more apt than his more docile fellows to find and appropriate real values.

The essays presented in this chapter discuss the relation of language to thinking. The student who desires a "thorough reconstruction" of his own mind, who wishes to follow Robinson's advice to "create a new and unprecedented attitude of mind to meet the new and unprecedented conditions which confront us," will find that the study of his own language processes is a direct approach to his problem.

If he wishes to answer Percy Marks' question and find out what sort of person he is, he will find the study of language illuminating. (The student who says he is interested in history but not in English may discover that the primary record of the progress of civilization is to be found in language.) The student who is interested in social and economic problems may find that they involve the fundamental value systems of men, and that these systems—the whole round of things approved and not approved—are acquired as the individual learns the language of his group. The student who is interested in psychology may find that speech is the most characteristic mode of human behavior, and that the study of mind is intimately associated with the study of language. The student who wishes to use language as a means of self-expression may find that the most profitable approach is not through books of rhetoric and handbooks of style, but through the study of the language processes themselves.

If speech as a mode of human behavior has the fundamental significance attached to it by the writers of the extracts quoted in this chapter then it will repay careful study. If the work does not prove interesting and profitable the fault will be with you and your method of work, not with the activity to be studied.

Language and Human Nature

Fortunately, the study of that type of human behavior which we call speech may prove very fascinating.

An unexpected perversity on the part of my car some time ago proved very annoying. Without warning, the front wheels began to act in a manner which is difficult to describe. They turned rapidly from side to side, giving a distressing vibration to the car. Each time this happened it was necessary to slow up, or slow down, if you prefer; I am quite humble about words. And I notice that the

usage on road signs is not uniform! That evening at the garage I called the mechanic and attempted to explain what had happened so that he might remedy the difficulty before I needed the car the following morning. My diagnostic vocabulary, even its exclamatory registers, was entirely inadequate. I resorted to the sign language. In fact, my exposition was literally a manifesto. Finally, the mechanic grasped the difficulty and said, "Oh, she shimmied on you, did she? I'll fix that all right." And he did. Both the verbal and the mechanical difficulties were admirably taken care of.

Incidentally, I was at the source of language in the making. The opinion of many people is that language is a finished thing. In fact, it is ever renewing its youth, and every regenesis, every adaptation to our demands upon it, is rich in comment upon some characteristic of human nature.

The following bit of dialog is duplicated every day of the year. John is up in his room. His brother is below waiting for him.

"Hurry up, John, and come on down."
"I'll be there dreckly."
"Aw, hurry up, we ain't got time to fool here all day!"

It is evident that "directly," or "dreckly," as it was pronounced, is not a satisfactory answer to one who is in a hurry. It seems to imply delay. Yet, according to the dictionary, *directly* means in a manner free from intervening conditions, immediately. It was first used in this connection to express immediate action. Why do we recognize it as a word implying delay? A little observation of human nature will make the change in meaning clear. We are prone to say what others would have us say, and to do as suits our convenience. The habit of delay, even when we have promised to act immediately, has given the new meaning to the word.

If one were asked to define the meaning of *up*, it is likely that he would define it in terms of space relation. *Down* would be its opposite. But this does not seem to be its meaning in the dialog above, "Hurry up, and come on down," nor in the sentences, "The ice has broken up in the river," and "He up and died."

You bring an apple to a friend, and he thanks you. The usual reply is, "You are welcome." But *welcome* is *well come*. It has its original meaning in "You are welcome to our home." In the case of the gift to your friend, it is evident that he has not come at all, that you are the one who has *well come*. Perhaps the occasion for the shift in usage is the fact that its original use became somewhat formal. The word was used to express the doubtful pleasure with which an unexpected and unwanted guest was *welcomed*. This vague meaning easily carried the word over to the sometimes doubtful pleasure of the giver of a gift. A similar shift through the field of vague emotion accounts for the phrases *mighty weak*, and *awfully cute*.

Another interesting word is *good-bye*. We use it lightly at parting for a short time from friends. Yet *good-bye* was originally "God be with you." The frequent repetition of the phrase as a perfunctory expression at parting from those to whom the speaker was indifferent finally stripped it of its meaning. In time, the words themselves became obscured. A certain type of superficial politeness leads people to use words which are stronger than their feelings. In all such cases, the words naturally degenerate in meaning to the level of the feeling usually present when they are spoken. It often happens that a new word or phrase has to be used when we wish to convey the original stronger feeling.

The all too human habit of thinking ill of those whose manners differ from ours has given rise to some interesting changes in the meanings of words. With us the word *villain* is synonymous with, or even more opprobrious than

scoundrel. It was brought into English from the Italian with something of its present meaning. It is derived from the word *villa,* meaning a country house, and it originally meant merely a dweller in a country house. When the cities arose to prominence during the Middle Ages and their inhabitants took on some degree of refinement, the man who lived in the country was looked down upon as boorish, and *villain* became a word of reproach. From contempt for the manners of *villains* to the ascription to them of all manner of crime was an easy step. Interestingly enough the Italian word *villa,* from which *villain* was derived, was later brought into the language as a term of compliment to a well appointed country house.

A few sentences back the word *boorish* was used to describe the uncouth manners of the dweller in the villa. This word is from the Dutch word which meant "to till." It has a history somewhat similar to that of *villain. Uncouth,* which has just been used as a synonym for boorish, originally meant merely *unknown, not familiar.*

This same human trait has given our meaning to the word *outlandish,* i.e., belonging to the out-lands, hence unfamiliar and queer and inferior. *Pagan* originally meant a villager, the *heathen* a dweller on the heath.

The obverse of this provincialism of sympathy has given our meanings for *genteel,* and *gentle.* They mean, literally, "belonging to the same clan." Genteel manners are our manners, and the conduct of fellow clansmen toward each other is more gentle than their conduct toward one not of their clan.

Many words, originally of neutral meaning, have acquired reprehensible connotations. *Lewd,* in earlier English, meant ignorant. Sometimes it referred to the laity as opposed to the clergy. Its present meaning must have arisen from a general recognition of the characteristics of those to whom the word applied. *Licentious* meant having freedom to act,

having *license*. The deplorable fact that those who are free to act without any kind of restraint are prone to act basely has debased the word. A somewhat similar degeneration has befallen the word *vulgar*.

Gossip formerly named a sponsor in baptism. The word occurred as *gossib* and as *godsib*, literally "related in God." But gossips were apt to be cronies. And cronies were apt to talk. And talk is apt to be gossip. So human nature has one more meaning shift to its discredit.

This fact of the deterioration of word meaning was noted and illustrated by Max Müller in his lectures on the Science of Language. His comment was, "It is curious to observe in how many words the meaning deteriorates, while it seldom improves."

The second part of the comment, that word meanings seldom improve, is scarcely in accord with fact. Deterioration of word meaning is perhaps more dramatic than improvement. Certainly it is difficult to strip a word of its present richness of meaning and to realize its cruder meaning in the minds of its earlier users. Observation of the meanings a child has for common words will show, however, that added experience develops richer word meanings. The fact is that most of the words of the language have become richer in meaning as our racial culture has developed. It is inevitable that the words of a language should grow in thought content as those who use them advance in civilization. *Worship*, in earlier English, was a noun designating one who was worthy, or honorable. This meaning is preserved in the phrase "Your Worship." The association of the word with our most intimate religious experience has given it new and richer meaning. The wealth and beauty of emotion which we associate with the words *home* and *mother* did not originally belong to them. It is a part of our heritage of spiritual wealth accumulated by our ancestors through the generations.

An English lecturer reports himself to have told an audience of fashionable New York women, "This is the homeliest audience I have addressed in America." He intended a compliment. For him the word *homely* had all the connotation of home, homelike. One wonders whether the American meaning of the word is due to the fact that the daughter of least personal charm is the one most likely to be forced to win approval through the exercise of the *homely* virtues!

Among the cruder peoples, words of affection and appreciation are rare. It is common to hear the vilest words applied with a complimentary meaning. A friend who spent a summer with a construction gang said that he never really had any hold on the affections of the men until they began to address him in terms of abuse. Even among the more refined it is common to hear the word *scoundrel*, "a disgusting fellow," applied as a term of endearment. Our word *fond* comes from a word which meant "to act as a fool." Roger Ascham, in *The Schoolmaster*, lamented the license of the young men of his day, and added, "And that which is the most to be marveled at, commonlie the wisest and also the best men be the *fondest* fathers in this behalf." Evidently foolishness about one's children and affection for them produced the same kind of action.

School comes through the Latin from a Greek word meaning leisure. The business of the Greek was war and politics. He gave his leisure time to learning. History repeats itself. Many of our present-day students seem to have the same meaning for the word!

The history of ideas may be read in the language much as the history of life may be read in the fossils of the earth crust. *Hearty, learn by heart, cordial*, from the Latin for heart, acquired their meanings at a time when the heart was thought to be the seat of the more profound thoughts. *Lunatic* received its meaning when people thought the moon to be the cause of mental infirmity.

Language and Thought

The discussion so far may suggest that there is a very close connection between our language and our thought processes. T. S. Clouston says, "Speech is, in short, one of the best indices not only of sanity or insanity but of mental force. A highly evolved language means a highly evolved race. Savages use only words in hundreds, civilized men in hundreds of thousands."[1] And what is true of a nation is also true of individuals.

Certain types of thinking, however, do not necessarily involve speech. The mechanic may repair a broken electric connection without the use of words—though, perhaps he seldom does so. When one begins to make a box out of some boards, he builds a mental picture of the possible box, and utilizes his images of the materials at hand in building this mental picture. As children, we began many things only to find that we did not have sufficient material to finish them. This was, of course, because we had not built up the mental picture of what we wished to make with sufficient accuracy to see that our materials were inadequate. As we grew older and gained experience, this process of building the picture of what we desired to make, which is one type of what is called imagination, became more and more accurate, and so our efforts were more and more successful. This is a very useful kind of thinking and a kind which we need every day. But it is to be doubted if the mental power to do even this kind of thinking in any complicated situation could have been attained without the mental development which comes only through language.

Language Necessary for Abstract Thought

It is certainly true that when we come to all the things which make life beautiful and worth living we come to

[1] T. S. Clouston, *Unsoundness of Mind*, London, 1911, p. 294.

things which cannot be thought or spoken without words. Dr. S. S. Laurie says: "There is no aspect of human life, no complexity of human motive, no ethical relation, no aesthetic emotion, no religious aspiration, which language, as a medium of intercourse, and as literature, does not convey, and, while conveying, illumine."[2] When we speak of home with all its associations, of joy, of love, of honor, of duty, of beauty, we have to use words. We may express our ideas of concrete things by signs and by actions and by moving the things into order, but we cannot speak of these other things without language. And it is doubtful if we could think and feel these things if we had no language.

Of course, we must remember that other conventionalized signs are language just as much as the spoken word. This will be taken for granted all through the discussion of the relation of language to thinking.

Students who wish to know how language functions in the development of the individual mind will do well to read *The Story of My Life* and *Midstream*, by Helen Keller. That story of the development of the blind-deaf girl is an important contribution to our knowledge of the function of language. In *Midstream*, Miss Keller says that "without language of some sort one is not a human being." She pays beautiful tribute to Dr. Samuel Gridley Howe, who had the "imagination to realize that the immortal spirit of Laura Bridgman had not died when her physical senses were sealed up." The work of Dr. Howe was largely responsible for the education of Helen Keller. He often quoted from Blackstone's *Commentaries* a passage which shows the unfortunate lot of blind-deaf children before the function of language was understood:

"A man is not an idiot, if he hath any glimmerings of reason so he can tell his parents, his age, or the like mat-

[2] S. S. Laurie, *Lectures on Language and Linguistic Method*, Edinburgh, 1904, p. 10.

ters. But a man who is born deaf, dumb, and blind is looked upon by the law as in the same state with an idiot; he being supposed incapable of any understanding, as wanting all those senses which furnish the mind with ideas."

The entire story of Miss Keller's education and life is well worth reading, but it is no part of this discussion. It is sufficient to say that she studied what other children study, that she finished her college course and has become a useful woman. The point pertinent here is that it was through language that she has been able to accomplish what she has accomplished, that she learned the meaning of that love of the unfortunate which characterizes her work now, that she learned all that makes life worth living.

Language—the Storehouse of Racial Wisdom

Language is truly the storehouse of the wisdom of the race, and it is only by the use of language that the individual can begin to build on the foundation which the race has laid. This does not mean that in literature, primarily, we are to find this racial wisdom, but rather in the language itself. The very pattern of language is a mold which gives shape to the plastic spirit of each new generation. As G. F. Stout says,

"Language as a social possession is a means of guiding the thought processes of individuals in the directions which have already been successfully followed up by others. Thus the individual in his intellectual progress finds paths already marked out for him, instead of having to find his way through a trackless labyrinth. Language as a social possession gradually leads up to a corresponding organization of thought-process in the individual."[3]

J. Mark Baldwin makes the statement of this truth even more specific and convincing in the following:

[3] G. F. Stout, *Analytic Psychology*, London, Macmillan and Company, Ltd., Vol. II, p. 203.

"It would appear that language is the instrument of social habit, in the sense that it conserves and stores up as a social heritage the accretions to common meaning. And this appears not simply as a fact, but by reason of the principle that *only in language* are the available elements of personal experience and meaning socially stored and rendered continuously available. It is the register of tradition, the record of racial conquest, the deposit of all the gains made by the genius of individuals. In terms of our earlier discussion, the social 'copy-system' thus established reflects the judgmental processes of the race; and in turn becomes the training school of the judgment of the new generations. Not indeed would I say that linguistic models and linguistic study as such have any such pedagogical importance; that is just the fallacy of our present-day instruction, that makes a fetish of language as such. But every day linguistic intercourse, language performing its vital rôle, is thus important.

"Most of the training of the self, whereby the vagaries of the personal reaction to fact and image are reduced to the funded basis of sound judgment, comes through the use of speech. When the child speaks, he lays before the world his suggestion for a general and common meaning; the reception it gets confirms or refutes him. In either case he is instructed."[4]

If these facts of history and of biography, of everyday observation and of psychological theory sustain this opinion of the interrelation of thought and speech, it becomes a matter of some importance that we acquire a thorough mastery of language.

But the term "mastery of language" implies more than the learning of the rules of grammar and of rhetoric. It means a careful study of our own speech and of that of the people around us and of the books we read. It implies what

[4] J. Mark Baldwin, *Thought and Things*, The Macmillan Company, 1906, Vol. II, pp. 147-148.

Ruskin meant when he spoke of reading letter by letter. A knowledge of the history of our language may be of value. A systematization of the speech habits of our contemporaries —what we call grammar and rhetoric—will help. But nothing which can be condensed into a brief text or a school course will take the place of constant attention to the language we hear and read and speak. Language skill may not be learned from a book. It is more like skill in playing a musical instrument, or baseball. And like these other skills, in fact like all valuable things, it can come only as the result of a slow process of growth, and as the result of our own activity. Teachers and textbooks can only show how it may be acquired; they cannot impart it.

Many students who are looking forward to the mechanical occupations or to the trades, some of those who are preparing for professions such as law and medicine, not a few who are preparing to teach subjects other than English, feel that time spent in the study of language is wasted time. It must be admitted that much language and grammar work in the schools has no very definite relation to the development of the desired mastery of language. It is true that the student's language powers are developed in all well taught subjects—often in other subjects more than in what is called "English." On the other hand, it is no less true that we must somewhere be made conscious of these language processes, and that we must at some time give special attention to them, if we desire proficiency. One does not develop skill in throwing the ball over the plate by chopping wood, nor in playing the piano by driving an automobile. It is only through consciously directed effort that we reach more than mediocre skill in any process. It may not be the business of everybody to have skill in throwing the ball over the plate or in playing the piano, but it is the business of everybody who wishes to lead a useful, successful, happy life to think straight on all questions of ethics, of economics, of honor, of duty. And

straight thinking comes only through an accurate use of language.

So intimately connected with our habits of thinking and living are the words we use and the way we use them that our speech will more quickly and surely show a stranger the strength or the weakness of our character, the wealth or the poverty of our spiritual and intellectual furnishings, than our dress or our more superficial habits.

The writers of the articles included here speak of the necessity for some concrete symbol as a basis for thinking. They find these symbols almost entirely in the words of the language. This is, perhaps, necessary in any elementary discussion. But it is desirable to recognize that the sentence idiom —the natural flow of words in an order peculiar to the language you are speaking—is also a symbol, and has all the necessary value which is here given to words. More than this, the technical outline is a still more extended symbol, and necessary for consecutive thought. It is just as necessary for the mature intelligent man to have habituated himself to the rigid logical outlining of his thought as it is for the child to habituate his limited vocabulary and his simple sentence idioms.

It is well to keep in mind a difference between thinking in this field of human relations and thinking in the field of the physical sciences. One may appropriate the technical thought of the scientist without doing the thinking. At the wheel of a car, one may utilize the thought of chemists, engineers, electricians, without being able to think in their terms. But in this field of your own thoughts and your relations to others, the thinking of others is of little value. It is necessary to do your own thinking. The work of others may assist. It may point the way. It may show pit-falls to be avoided. It may stimulate. But you must make your own observations, test your own opinions, make your own associations of experience into your own outline of thought.

A LANGUAGE SUBSTITUTE

By Jonathan Swift

(Jonathan Swift, 1667-1745, was one of the most famous English satirists and men of letters of his day. This extract is from *Gulliver's Travels: Voyage to Laputa.*)

We next went to the school of languages, where three professors sat in consultation upon improving that of their own country.

The first project was to shorten discourse by cutting polysyllables into one, and leaving out verbs and participles; because, in reality, all things imaginable are but nouns.

The other project was a scheme for entirely abolishing all words whatsoever; and this was urged as a great advantage in point of health, as well as brevity. For it is plain that every speech is, in some degree, a diminution of our lungs by corrosion; and consequently contributes to the shortening of our lives. An expedient was therefore offered that since words are only names for things, it would be more convenient for all men to carry about them such things as were necessary to express the particular business they are to discourse on. And this invention would have certainly taken place, to the great ease as well as health of the subject, if the women, in conjunction with the vulgar and illiterate, had not threatened to raise a rebellion, unless they might be allowed the liberty to speak with their tongues after the manner of their forefathers; such constant irreconcilable enemies to science are the common people. However, many of the most learned and wise adhere to the new scheme of expressing themselves by things; which hath only this inconvenience attending it, that if a man's business be very great, and of various kinds, he must be obliged, in proportion, to carry a great bundle of things upon his back, unless he can afford one or two strong servants to attend him. I have often be-

held two of those sages almost sinking under the weight of their packs, like pedlars among us; who, when they met in the street, hold conversation for an hour together; then put up their implements, help each other resume their burthens, and take their leave.

But, for short conversations, a man may carry implements in his pockets, and under his arms, enough to supply him; and in his house he cannot be at a loss. Therefore, the room where company meet, who practice this art, is full of all things ready at hand, requisite to furnish matter for this kind of artificial conversation.

Another great advantage, proposed by this invention, was, that it would serve as a universal language, to be understood in all civilized nations, whose goods and utensils are generally of the same kind, or nearly resembling, so that their uses might easily be comprehended. And thus ambassadors would be qualified to treat with foreign princes, or ministers of state, to whose tongues they were utter strangers.

LANGUAGE AND THE TRAINING OF THOUGHT*

By John Dewey

(Perhaps no writer on education and philosophy in America during the past forty years has been more widely and more favorably known, nationally and internationally, than John Dewey. He has been, during his long years of service, connected with the University of Minnesota, the University of Michigan, Chicago University, and Columbia University. Among his books, the following might well be read by college students: *How We Think*, from which the present essay is taken, 1910; *Democracy and Education*, 1916; *Human Nature and Conduct*, 1922; and *Experience and Nature*, 1925.)

Speech has such a peculiarly intimate connection with thought as to require special discussion. Although the very word logic comes from logos (λόγος), meaning indifferently

*Reprinted by permission from *How We Think*, by John Dewey, published by D. C. Heath and Company, 1910.

both word or speech, and thought or reason, yet "words, words, words" denote intellectual barrenness, a sham of thought. Although schooling has language as it chief instrument (and often as its chief matter) of study, educational reformers have for centuries brought their severest indictments against the current use of language in the schools. The conviction that language is necessary to thinking (is even identical with it) is met by the contention that language perverts and conceals thought.

Three typical views have been maintained regarding the relation of thought and language: first, that they are identical; second, that words are the garb or clothing of thought, necessary not for thought but only for conveying it; and third (the view we shall here maintain) that while language is not thought it is necessary for thinking as well as for its communication. When it is said, however, that thinking is impossible without language, we must recall that language includes much more than oral and written speech. Gestures, pictures, monuments, visual images, finger movements—anything consciously employed as a *sign* is, logically, language. To say that language is necessary for thinking is to say that signs are necessary. Thought deals not with bare things, but with their *meanings*, their suggestions; and meanings, in order to be apprehended, must be embodied in sensible and particular existences. Without meaning, things are nothing but blind stimuli or chance sources of pleasure and pain; and since meanings are not themselves tangible things, they must be anchored by attachment to some physical existence. Existences that are especially set aside to fixate and convey meanings are *signs* or *symbols*. If a man moves toward another to throw him out of the room, his movement is not a sign. If, however, the man points to the door with his hand, or utters the sound *go*, his movement is reduced to a vehicle of meaning: it is a sign or symbol. In the case of signs we care nothing for what they are in themselves, but

everything for what they signify and represent. *Canis, hund, chien*, dog—it makes no difference what the outward thing is, so long as the meaning is presented.

Natural objects are signs of other things and events. Clouds stand for rain; a footprint represents game or an enemy; a projecting rock serves to indicate minerals below the surface. The limitations of natural signs are, however, great. (*i*) The physical or direct sense excitation tends to distract attention from what is meant or indicated. Almost every one will recall pointing out to a kitten or puppy some object of food, only to have the animal devote himself to the hand pointing, not to the thing pointed at. (*ii*) Where natural signs alone exist, we are mainly at the mercy of external happenings; we have to wait until the natural event presents itself in order to be warned or advised of the possibility of some other event. (*iii*) Natural signs, not being originally intended to be signs, are cumbrous, bulky, inconvenient, unmanageable.

It is therefore indispensable for any high development of thought that there should be also intentional signs. Speech supplies the requirement. Gestures, sounds, written or printed forms, are strictly physical existences, but their native value is intentionally subordinated to the value they acquire as representative of meanings. (*i*) The direct and sensible value of faint sounds and minute written or printed marks is very slight. Accordingly, attention is not distracted from their *representative* function. (*ii*) Their production is under our direct control so that they may be produced when needed. When we can make the word *rain*, we do not have to wait for some physical forerunner of rain to call our thoughts in that direction. We cannot make the cloud; we can make the sound, and as a token of meaning the sound serves the purpose as well as the cloud. (*iii*) Arbitrary linguistic signs are convenient and easy to manage. They are

compact, portable, and delicate. As long as we live we breathe; and modifications by the muscles of throat and mouth of the volume and quality of the air are simple, easy, and indefinitely controllable. Bodily postures and gestures of the hand and arm are also employed as signs, but they are coarse and unmanageable compared with modifications of breath to produce sounds. No wonder that oral speech has been selected as the main stuff of intentional intellectual signs. Sounds, while subtle, refined, and easily modifiable, are transitory. This defect is met by the system of written and printed words, appealing to the eye. *Litera scripta manet.*

Bearing in mind the intimate connection of meanings and signs (or language), we may note in more detail what language does (1) for specific meanings, and (2) for the organization of meanings.

I. Individual Meanings. A verbal sign (a) selects, detaches, a meaning from what is otherwise a vague flux or blur; (b) it retains, registers, stores that meaning; and (c) applies it, when needed, to the comprehension of other things. Combining these various functions in a mixture of metaphors, we may say that a linguistic sign is a fence, a label, and a vehicle—all in one.

(a) Every one has experienced how learning an appropriate name for what was dim and vague cleared up and crystallized the whole matter. Some meaning seems almost within reach, but is elusive; it refuses to condense into definite form; the attaching of a word somehow (just how, it is almost impossible to say) puts limits around the meaning, draws it out from the void, makes it stand out as an entity on its own account. When Emerson said that he would almost rather know the true name, the poet's name, for a thing, than to know the thing itself, he presumably had this irradiating and illuminating function of language in mind.

The delight that children take in demanding and learning the names of everything about them indicates that meanings are becoming concrete individuals to them, so that their commerce with things is passing from the physical to the intellectual plane. It is hardly surprising that savages attach a magic efficacy to words. To name anything is to give it a title; to dignify and honor it by raising it from a mere physical occurrence to a meaning that is distinct and permanent. To know the names of people and things and to be able to manipulate these names is, in savage lore, to be in possession of their dignity and worth, to master them.

(b) Things come and go; or we come and go, and either way things escape our notice. Our direct sensible relation to things is very limited. The suggestion of meanings by natural signs is limited to occasions of direct contact or vision. But a meaning fixed by a linguistic sign is conserved for future use. Even if the thing is not there to represent the meaning, the word may be produced so as to evoke the meaning. Since intellectual life depends on possession of a store of meanings, the importance of language as a tool of preserving meanings cannot be overstated. To be sure, the method of storage is not wholly aseptic; words often corrupt and modify the meanings they are supposed to keep intact, but liability to infection is a price paid by every living thing for the privilege of living.

(c) When a meaning is detached and fixed by a sign, it is possible to use that meaning in a new context and situation. This transfer and reapplication is the key to all judgment and inference. It would little profit a man to recognize that a given particular cloud was the premonitor of a given particular rainstorm if his recognition ended there, for he would then have to learn over and over again, since the next cloud and the next rain are different events. No cumulative growth of intelligence would occur; experience might form habits of physical adaptation but it would not teach anything, for

we should not be able to use a prior experience consciously to anticipate and regulate a further experience. To be able to use the past to judge and infer the new and unknown implies that, although the past thing has gone, its *meaning* abides in such a way as to be applicable in determining the character of the new. Speech forms are our great carriers: the easy-running vehicles by which meanings are transported from experiences that no longer concern us to those that are as yet dark and dubious.

II. Organization of Meanings. In emphasizing the importance of signs in relation to specific meanings, we have overlooked another aspect, equally valuable. Signs not only mark off specific or individual meanings, but they are also instruments of grouping meanings in relation to one another. Words are not only names or titles of single meanings; they also form *sentences* in which meanings are organized in relation to one another. When we say "That book is a dictionary," or "That blur of light in the heavens is Halley's comet," we express a *logical* connection—an act of classifying and defining that goes beyond the physical thing into the logical region of genera and species, things and attributes. Propositions, sentences, bear the same relation to judgments that distinct words, built up mainly by analyzing propositions in their various types, bear to meanings or conceptions; and just as words imply a sentence, so a sentence implies a larger whole of consecutive discourse into which it fits. As is often said, grammar expresses the unconscious logic of the popular mind. *The chief intellectual classifications that constitute the working capital of thought have been built up for us by our mother tongue.* Our very lack of explicit consciousness in using language that we are employing the intellectual systematizations of the race shows how thoroughly accustomed we have become to its logical distinctions and groupings.

WHY DO WORDS BOSS YOU?*

By GEORGE A. DORSEY

(In the Preface to *Hows and Whys of Human Behavior*, George A. Dorsey raises such questions as "Why do we do so and so?" "How do we get this way or that?" "What should we do to be thus and so?" In the body of the book, the author attempts to answer these questions.

In the discussions so far in this chapter, there has been evidence that language is a necessary instrument for mental development. In this selection, there is indication that language may also interfere with our thinking.

Few men have had so wide and varied experience in all parts of the world as the author of this selection. He is anthropologist and journalist. Among his many publications in the field of anthropology and anatomy are several books which might well interest college students: *Why We Behave Like Human Beings*, 1925; *The Nature of Man*, 1927; and the book from which this selection is taken.)

YOU KNOW anywhere from five to ten or possibly thirty thousand words. Each day you use two or three thousand, the number being determined by how much you talk or write or think, and especially by what you talk about. For some subjects you presumably have a larger vocabulary than for others, and for many subjects probably no vocabulary at all—a book or conversation on such a subject would be "Greek" to you.

Words are tools—the tools you use to work your fellow men. The more words you know, the greater your command over your social environment. Many doors open more readily to words than to jimmies; for it is quite true, as we used to tell our children, that hearts, like doors, open with ease to little keys called "thank you" and "if you please."

All this probably seems obvious to you. What may not be so obvious is that you are the victim of words even more than you are of hunger, storms, or poisoned arrows. You

*Reprinted by permission from *Hows and Whys of Human Behavior*, by George A. Dorsey, published by Harper and Brothers, 1929.

live in a physical world, but you also live in a word-world. You are bossed by words. And unless you have thought about it especially, you will not easily realize the enormous part words play in your life. Indeed, I know of nothing that can more clarify thinking or better help us understand ourselves, our nature, our powers, and our limits, than the realization that we live in a word-world and must eternally adjust ourselves to it.

The physical world is none too easy to live in; it can trip us up in a thousand different ways. But this word-world. . . ! I can lose a race against heat or be overwhelmed by a flood, and that is bitter enough; but the bitterness of defeat by the elements is as nothing to the agony of being called an outcast, or of having my immortal soul consigned to hell for all eternity.

Have you ever thought of words that way or tried to realize what they can do to you? Do you know that without words or speech there would be no human culture or civilization, and that what we call civilization is largely a matter of words? Possibly most of civilization's ills, foibles, and diseases have come about because talk is so cheap that the poorest of us can fool ourselves into believing that we are enormously healthy, wealthy, and wise—even when our outlook is a barred window and our costliest garment a strait-jacket.

We eternally and ceaselessly talk to ourselves, and call it thinking. But where does the thinking get us if the words we use mean only what we want them to mean? Yet that is what we all do. That is what our ancestors have been doing since Adam—handing on from one generation to another a mass of words or vocabulary so heavily loaded with ghosts, devils, vanities, and asininities, that we spend the most valuable years of our lives learning them and the remainder of our years staggering under them or struggling to get free of them. . . .

Consider some of the words you picked up as a boy which became tools with which you clubbed your playmates or which were hurled at you as daggers or poisoned arrows; such as: stingy, coward, 'fraidy cat, stinker, piker, tattletale, cheat, sissy, liar, thief. Did I not have to conform to "decency," the list of poison words could easily be extended. . . .

The psychology behind "style," "fashion," "they," holds in general for "success," "progress," "loyalty," "culture," "refinement," "society," "getting ahead," "playing the game," *et cetera.* These and similar words and phrases in varying forms fell upon my youthful ears as thick and fast as raindrops, but no one took the trouble to define "success," "progress," "culture," or "society," or told me where I would be when I "got ahead," or whose game I was to play if I "played the game." Rating success by the current coin of the dollar, I must be a colossal failure in the eyes of my millionaire friends—and some of them are not too careful to conceal the fact. That one word "success" alone hurled at youth from every angle, and even shouted at him from the covers of magazines, is enough to account for many of the idiocies of modern life.

Get more, do more, do it now, succeed—we are buried alive under slogans, bossed by more devils than are known to a Buddhist Hades, driven more ways than poor animal nature can respond to and remain human or animal.

Not only must we achieve "success," but we are gravely informed by parents and school-teachers that in the bright lexicon of youth there is no such word as "fail." And many a boy, having had that injunction instilled deeply enough into him, then and there begins to fail in ways heretofore unknown to history. The psychology behind that phrase is all wrong. Failure is sometimes inevitable in this universe in which we live. Some of the loftiest mountain peaks have failed, oceans have dried up, stars have lost their vitality

and gone out in darkness, great branches of the tree of life once dominant have crashed down in utter failure.

"Success" and "failure" as they are handed to youth can only be made a goal or something to be avoided as youth is taught sane and useful habits of living. Bodily behavior, in short, must be fashioned along lines of habits which are attainable by human nature. To set up verbalized standards incompatible with human capacity or at variance with human needs, is to make for personality conflicts and social disorders. I was *told* to hitch my wagon to a star; but my father took considerable pains to *teach* me how and where to hitch my horses and how to drive a wagon load of hay. . . .

The list of loaded words we learn, whose burdens we bear and which boss us, is a long one, and I make no pretense to having exhausted it. Each one of us, in fact, has his own particular repertoire. The extent to which you or I may be "disgraced" or "mortified" or "chagrined" differs, of course, according as our characters, habits of life, and views on life, vary; and varies likewise with each of us according to circumstance. This must be so obvious that it need not be emphasized. But there is a list of very little words which we must now look at—mighty they are, and quite out of proportion to their size.

I, my, me, mine.
We, our, us, ours.

We were taught that it is polite to say "you and I," but grammar knows better and human nature knows better: "I" is the first person, and for me personally the exact center of the known universe. We tell the child not to be selfish; but from birth and in a thousand ways we encourage the "I" to find expression, to give expression, to exhibit itself. And "I" does. The biggest chapter in psychology is behind these little words. We can go further and say that in a way the psychology behind them is responsible for practically all

human conflicts, all human strife, all human wars. *My* country right or wrong, *my* family, *my* children, *my* religion, *my* God (is, as I should like to be, an avenger and will torment if, *et cetera*), *my* party, *my* town, *my* college, *my* fraternity, *my* lodge; *I* says, sez *I*; *we* are the people.

There is biology behind this psychology. We are not by nature gregarious animals; we *are* by nature family animals. Nature provided us with ways of distinguishing friends from foes. To hate our enemies and love our friends comes to us naturally—and too easily. But the point I would emphasize is that as we are brought up these pronouns become so heavily loaded with the primitive animal emotions of hate, fear, and love, that we are swayed by animal passions, and hence fail to exercise the critical judgment or intelligent choice which is our human prerogative.

As long as I feel that I am inevitably or irrevocably "committed" to *my* this or *my* that, I thereby and to that extent surrender my right of choice and lose the freedom of judgment which is my most priceless privilege.

Many a human being comes to the so-called "age of discretion" without a shred of discretionary capacity left in his or her make-up. Everything associated with the first person singular or plural (personal or possessive) is "good" because the personal pronoun accompanying it makes it so. But every country, religion, or even race, language, or culture, with the third-person handle, or to a less extent with the second-person handle, is, just because of the handle, "inferior." So it is that we come unquestioningly to have preformed judgments for every human being and every human act in the world. "Superior" races, "inferior" races; "high" languages, "low" languages; "civilization," "barbarism"; "cultured" peoples, "savage" peoples. The number of antitheses that could be named is almost unlimited. Your vocabulary probably contains many stronger than any I have used.

Think of the implications attached to such words as "Nigger," "Dago," "Wop," "Chink," and so forth. These words, as you and I learned them, covered a multitude of sins—of omission and commission. How has the young black boy learned them? How does he face life, having learned the load that the word "Nigger" carries for his white self-styled "superiors"? The shackles on the leg of his paternal great-grandfather could not have been more real in limiting his freedom than the handicap thus placed upon him as he gradually learns to know all that the word "Nigger" implies.

That the "inferiors" do not stay put—and that despite the artificial handicaps thrown about them in acquiring English "as she is spoke"—should help to drive home the lesson that a thing is not necessarily so simply because there is a word for it. Words, after all, are but man-made tools, which often persist long after they are worn out; and, like other human institutions, are often put to oppressive and inhuman uses.

Well then, what are words, anyhow, and why do you use them? Why are you a talking animal, and what is the rôle of speech? These are big questions to which space here permits only brief and dogmatic answers, but even so I shall hope to clear up a few of the common misconceptions about our major activity and our most human trait.

Words are tools, but they differ in one fundamental respect from hatchets and hammers. For example, when our ape grandfather cracked a cocoanut with a stone, the stone was a tool: with it he got a new and better control over his physical environment. And when he hurled a cry of rage at some one who threatened to steal his cocoanut, the cry also was a tool: it gave him some measure of control over his social environment. But when he told that "some one" that he would crack his head with the stone if he did not let his cocoanuts alone, he had an even more powerful tool for social control.

That is the way words came to be evolved. Finely shaded emotional cries (expressive of rage, fear, love, pain, hunger, thirst, *et cetera*) developed into words which accomplished the same social ends, but more exactly, and were therefore less likely to be misunderstood. Speech, therefore, is a tool or instrument for accomplishing some end, but the end is primarily social—just as it was originally in its animal form.

Our civilization is based on the coördinated activity of groups of human beings. Speech makes such activity possible. The hermit has no need for speech, nor even for vocal cords; he lacks objects (human beings) on which to use speech. Speech is as useless to him as a cradle or a love philter. Without speech human culture would disappear, and human society would split up into little groups with less cohesion than a flock of crows and no more cohesion than a band of monkeys—and with just as much "morality," "religion," "art," "science," and "government."

The animal cry is a response to a situation, and to that extent *objectifies* the environment; speech *analyzes* the situation. Thus through speech I can make a distinctive response to any single feature of any situation for which I have a name or which I can describe in words. Specifically, I can declare, command, or question. And all speech falls into one or other of these three fundamental forms. To discover how true this is, analyze the next conversation you sit in—or even a casual interchange of speech. "I'll tell the world." "Do it now." "Why didn't you?" Even when I exclaim I merely declare assent or dissent, or otherwise express some personal point of view.

One more important point must be noted: I can "create" universes, heavens, hells, deities, devils, anything, with words. It is not necessary that I should have learned these heavens, deities, *et cetera*, with my natural tools (sense organs) for learning the objective word; it is not necessary that I should have *seen* a heaven with streets of gold, or that I should

have *smelled* the odor of hell's brimstone. Without using any senses at all, I can create a word-world which need have no more objective existence than the broomstick-mounted witches who used to sail off to the moon, or the Santa Claus who used to defy gravity and time and climb down chimneys. And what I can do with words you can do, even as our ancestors did for thousands of years.

With words I can play a marvelous game of golf, break the bank at Monte Carlo, corner the world's supply of grain, wage a war to end wars and save the world for democracy. Or, to put it another way, as an honest, industrious animal, I can manipulate only such parts of this universe as I get my paws on and my teeth into; but as a talking animal following my major activity, I am not limited by time or things tangible, or bounded by space or things concrete. I can create anything, talk about anything, do anything—in words; remold my world to my heart's desire; and consign you and yours to a hell so hot that the very words sear your flesh and make you writhe in a paroxysm of agony.

Now, the mere creation of heavens and hells is not a major human activity; talking about such things is. Just how much man would sweat to achieve "success" if he could not talk about it, or how much he would strive for "victory" if he could not boast about it, I have no idea. But there can be no doubt that for the last half-million years conversation has been the favorite indoor sport of the human race—nothing else is so cheap, so soul-satisfying, or can give mediocrity such a huge sense of self-importance. Speech was a *sine qua non* for civilization, but I must infer that civilization persists in spite of it. When civilization is based primarily on conversation, which in turn becomes an "art" and goes on, on its own, for art's sake, it has run to words and may become as sterile as a vestal virgin.

Talk can be as cheap as air; it can also be as fetid, as aim-

less, as lifeless. The noise you make when you boast of progress may not sound like the croak of a frog, but it is made with the same kind of vocal organs. A pond of croaking frogs on a dark night makes more progress than an average smoking car or Palm Beach conversation; and, biologically speaking, has more survival value.

What words do you use? The words you learned, of course. You were not born a talker, or a linguist, or with a "talent" for English, Chinese, or Bantu. All the talent you had at birth was for making sounds. And you kept on making them. At last you made a sound which got you service—a pin removed, a meal, what not, something you wanted. You thereby "learned" that sound or word. You could not have learned to talk unless you had used words to get you service—a form of control over your social environment whereby your bodily needs were adjusted to your physical environment.

Physical environment? Food, shelter, pins, cold, heat, *et cetera*. Bodily needs? Your animal requirements: food, water, comfort, mate, *et cetera*; your "ego," "I" or personality. . . .

That word-world may or may not exist, but if your world is predetermined by catch-phrases and stock epithets you are indeed bossed by words and your judgment need be no more intelligent than that of a mob at a lynching bee nor more high-minded than that of an alley cat presiding at a dog fight. If, on the contrary, your world is the world you know with your senses; if you sometimes mistrust the label on the bottle and analyze its contents; if you look behind the party's platform to its deeds when in power; if you make certain that you and your country are right before you damn the "foreigners"; if you question your hates and prejudices and can smile at your foibles and fears; if, in a word, you value your most priceless social tools, you will not hurl them about like a child, but will use them as you use money

—the right word for the end sought, and never a loaded word unless you know who loaded it and why. If, in short, you put more intelligence into your words, you will lessen their power to boss you and increase your power to control yourself and your fellow men. Beware, especially, of any word, phrase, or slogan which blows up whole groups of human beings. Every human being, including you and me, has a right to be judged as an individual—and, as I read my Bible, will eventually be so judged.

HOW WORDS INDICATE CHANGING TIMES*

By Mark Sullivan

(*Our Times* by Mark Sullivan is a richly documented account of the social, educational, and economic development of America between 1900 and 1925. The author, a journalist of note, special correspondent for metropolitan papers, and for several years editor of *Collier's*, has been closely associated with the events he describes. The paragraphs given here show the relation of the growth of our vocabulary to the growth of our civilization.)

In his newspapers of January 1, 1900, the American found no such word as radio,[5] for that was twenty years from coming; nor "movie," for that too was still mainly of the future; nor "chauffeur," for the automobile was only just emerging and had been called "horseless carriage" when treated seriously, but rather more frequently, "devil-wagon," and the driver the "engineer." There was no such word as "aviator"—all that that word implies was still a part of the

*Reprinted by permission from *Our Times: The Turn of the Century*, by Mark Sullivan, published by Charles Scribner's Sons, 1926.

[5] The number of new words added to the dictionary between 1900 and 1925, and new uses of old words, is a reflection of the expanding of man's intelligence and the increasing complexity of civilization. Nearly a thousand were used to adjust the radio to the language. Hundreds were required for the automobile, its parts and associations; yet more hundreds for the popular and technical terminology of aviation.

Arabian Nights. Nor was there any mention of income tax or surtax, no annual warnings of the approach of March 15 —all that was yet thirteen years from coming. In 1900 doctors had not heard of 606 or of insulin; science had not heard of relativity or of the quantum theory. Farmers had not heard of tractors, nor bankers of the Federal Reserve System. Merchants had not heard of chain-stores nor "self-service"; nor seamen of oil-burning engines. Modernism had not been added to the common vocabulary of theology, nor futurist and "cubist" to that of art. Politicians had not heard of direct primaries, nor of the commission form of government, nor of city managers, nor of blocs in Congress, nor of a League of Nations, nor of a World Court. They had not heard of "muck-rakers" nor of "Bull Moose" except in a zoological sense. Neither had they heard of "dry" and "wet" as categories important in vote-getting, nor of a Volstead Act; they had not heard of an Eighteenth Amendment, nor a Nineteenth, nor a Seventeenth, nor a Sixteenth —there were but fifteen amendments in 1900, and the last had been passed in 1869.

In 1900 woman suffrage had only made a beginning, in four thinly-peopled Western States. A woman governor or a woman congressman was a humorous idea, far-fetched, to be sure, yet one out of which a particularly fertile humorist, on the stage or in the papers, could get much whimsical burlesque. In 1900, the Lower House of Congress, in the spirit of a popular slogan that said, "Let the people elect their senators," and stimulated by two recent scandals in the naming of senators by state legislatures in Montana and Pennsylvania, passed, by a vote of 240 to 15, a resolution calling for a constitutional amendment to provide that senators should be chosen directly by the people. In 1900, at Madison, Wisconsin, on August 8, a State convention nominated Robert M. La Follette for governor and demanded that the system of party conventions and caucuses for gov-

ernor be abolished, and that nominations for political office be made by "direct primaries."

The newspapers of 1900 contained no mention of smoking by women, nor of "bobbing," nor "permanent wave," nor vamp, nor flapper, nor jazz, nor feminism, nor birth-control. There was no such word as rum-runner, nor hijacker, nor bolshevism, fundamentalism, behaviorism, Nordic, Freudian complexes, ectoplasm, brain-storm, Rotary, Kiwanis, blue-sky law, cafeteria, automat, sundae; nor mah-jong, nor cross-word puzzle. Not even military men had heard of camouflage; neither that nor "propaganda" had come into the vocabulary of the average man. "Over the top," "zero hour," "no man's land" meant nothing to him. "Drive" meant only an agreeable experience with a horse. The newspapers of 1900 had not yet come to the lavishness of photographic illustration that was to be theirs by the end of the quarter-century. There were no rotogravure sections. If there had been, they would not have pictured boy scouts, nor State constabularies, nor traffic cops, nor Ku Klux Klan parades; nor women riding astride, nor the nudities of the Follies, nor one-piece bathing-suits, nor advertisements of lip-sticks, nor motion-picture actresses, for there were no such things.

In 1900, "short-haired woman" was a phrase of jibing; women doctors were looked on partly with ridicule, partly with suspicion. Of prohibition and votes for women, the most conspicuous function was to provide material for newspaper jokes. Men who bought and sold lots were still real-estate agents, not "realtors." Undertakers were undertakers, not having yet attained the frilled euphemism of "mortician." There were no "star-routes" yet—rural free delivery had only just made a faint beginning; the parcel-post was yet to wait thirteen years. In 1900, "bobbing" meant sliding down a snow-covered hill; women had not yet gone to the barber-shop. For the deforestation of the male coun-

tenance, the razor of our grandfathers was the exclusive means; men still knew the art of honing. The hairpin, as well as the bicycle, the horseshoe, and the buggy were the bases of established and, so far as anyone could foresee, permanent businesses. Ox-teams could still be seen on country roads; horse-drawn street-cars in the cities. Horses or mules for trucks were practically universal; livery-stables were everywhere. The blacksmith beneath the spreading chestnut-tree was a reality; neither the garage mechanic nor the chestnut blight had come to retire that scene to poetry. The hitching-post had not been supplanted by the parking problem. Croquet had not given way to golf. "Boys in blue" had not yet passed into song. Army blue was not merely a sentimental memory, had not succumbed to the invasion of utilitarianism in olive green. G. A. R. were still potent letters. . . .

LANGUAGE THE CHIEF PRODUCT OF SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE*

By Charles H. Judd

(The volume from which this material is taken is the work of sixteen members of the University of Chicago faculty. It presents present scientific thought on the evolution of the physical universe and of man. The writer of this chapter, Charles H. Judd, has for twenty years been associated with the University of Chicago in the Department of Education and the Department of Psychology. He has contributed numerous articles on education and psychology to technical magazines, and has published more than a dozen books.)

The greatest achievement of man is the evolution of that chief instrument of social relation, language. The animals can make sounds and they use these sounds as a means of communication. The extent to which animals evolve in

*Reprinted by permission of The Chicago University Press from *The Nature of the World and of Man*, ed. H. H. Newman, 1926, Ch. XVII, "Mind in Evolution," by C. H. Judd.

communication can be described by saying that through the imitations of sounds they convey to one another certain general ideas such as the ideas of food or of danger. Man has been able to go much further. He has evolved a medium of communication which is so complete that it has transformed his whole mode of life and his relation to the world in which he lives by making social intercourse and the co-operative efforts which result from communication his chief method of adaptation. . . .

Evolution Through Systematization

Social psychology not only gives information about the beginnings of invention, but also reveals the more important fact that the mental capital of the race is steadily increasing. The increase is both through additions of new ideas and through the systematization of such ideas as we possess. It is hardly necessary to illustrate the way in which new ideas are accumulating. There is more justification for dwelling on the fact, which is often overlooked, that civilization makes progress by systematizing ideas.

Let us consider briefly one example of the way in which men have systematized experience. The words in our language which express some of the most fundamental and primitive ideas are typical of the earliest efforts to develop a language in that different sounds are used to express various aspects of the same fundamental idea. Thus we say "I am," "He is," "You are." "Am," "is," and "are" all express the same fundamental idea. This we state in modern grammar by saying that they are all forms of the verb "to be." The situation is very different when we deal with a verb of more recent origin. The verb "walk," for example, uses the same form for "I walk" and "You walk." It uses a very closely related form for "He walks." Not only so, but the past and the future forms of walk are like the present in root form, while in the more ancient word we have to use

different sounds when we say "I am," "I was," and "I will be."

Not alone the early verb forms are irregular; the same is true of adjectives with respect to their comparative forms. "Good" is an ancient word; it has a comparative form wholly different from the positive. The same is true of "Bad." The adjectives "New" and "Old" represent a later stage of language discrimination: their comparatives exhibit the same root form as the positive.

What is the meaning of the fact that ancient language forms are irregular and modern forms are regular? The answer to this question is that modern language has been systematized. When men first began to talk, they made a different sound in expressing each idea. If that had gone on indefinitely, the time would have come when language would have become utterly unwieldly, even as the system of Chinese writing became unwieldy through the multiplication of distinct symbols. The mind of man confronted by this difficulty simplified somewhat the expression of ideas by adopting a system which brought together related forms of words.

The history of language is a record of devices which have been used to systematize language and human thinking. Some of the earlier forms were so clumsy that they have been abandoned. For example, the method employed in certain primitive languages to express the plural is to repeat the stem. In the language of the Dakota Indians "Runa" means a person, "Runaruna" means the people. We have in the English language a much more economical way of forming plurals. Our method is the result of long racial experimentation. Another example of the same type is to be found in our use of the possessive case. The Latin language had a number of noun endings which were used to express possession. There were several declensions, as they are called, and the plural genitive was always different from

the singular. All these manifold forms have been reduced to the lowest possible terms in English. We use a single device to express the possessive for singular and plural nouns, feminine nouns and masculine. Our language is highly systematized and is, therefore, a superior medium of expression.

Language as an Instrument for Systematizing Experience

Language has not only been systematized in its own structure, but it is the chief means by which man has systematized and recorded his thinking about the world. One needs only to be reminded of the importance of a clear-cut scientific terminology to realize how systematized language has been used by the human race to express and transmit the ideas by which scientific order has been brought into a world which seems to the senses to present the most bewildering confusion.

TALKING AND THINKING*

By John B. Watson

(During the past few years, no work in psychology has attracted more attention than that of the behaviorists. John B. Watson has been, perhaps, the most widely known writer and experimenter in the behavioristic school of psychologists. As editor of the *Psychological Review*, and of the *Journal of Experimental Psychology*, and as the author of numerous books and articles, he has made distinct contribution to his field. The following extracts from his writing indicate that the behaviorist finds language to be a fundamental kind of human activity.)

In this lecture we take up one great field of learned activities which the brute cannot even enter, much less compete in. This is the field of *language habits*—habits which

*Reprinted by permission from *Behaviorism*, by John B. Watson, published by W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1925.

when exercised implicitly behind the closed doors of the lips we call *thinking*. . . .

The Bodily Economy of Having Word Substitutes for Objects

The fact that every object and situation in the external environment is *named* is of vast importance. Words not only can and do call out other words, phrases and sentences, but when the human being is properly organized they can call out all of his manual activity. The words function in the matter of calling out responses exactly as did the objects for which the words serve as substitutes. Wasn't it Dean Swift who had one of his characters who couldn't or wouldn't speak carry around in a bag all the objects of common use so that instead of having to say words to influence the behavior of others, he pulled out the actual object from his bag and showed it? The world would be in this situation today if we did not have this *equivalence for reaction* between objects and words. You get something of the helpless state humanity would be in unless we had this *equivalence*, in your own household when you by chance employ a Roumanian nurse, a German cook and a French butler and you yourself speak only English.

Think what it means in the economy of time and the ability to call out cooperation from groups to have word substitutes for objects common to all members.

Soon the human has a verbal substitute within himself theoretically for every object in the world. *Thereafter he carries the world around with him by means of this organization.* And he can manipulate this word world in the privacy of his room or when he lies down in his bed in the dark. Many of our discoveries come largely through this ability to manipulate a world of objects not actually present to our senses. Don't make the mistake that used to be made about "memory"—that "memories" are crowded inside a the-

oretical mind like proverbial jacks in the box ready to spring up even without a stimulus. We carry this world around with us as actual bodily organization, in the muscular and glandular organization of our throat, chest, etc. (including, of course, the sense organs in the muscles and the nervous system). That organization is ready to function day and night whenever the appropriate stimulus is given. What is this appropriate stimulus? . . .

The behaviorist advances the view that *what the psychologists have hitherto called thought is in short nothing but talking to ourselves.* . . .

My theory does hold that the muscular habits learned in overt speech are responsible for implicit or internal speech (thought). It holds, too, that there are hundreds of muscular combinations with which one can say either aloud or to himself almost any word, so rich and so flexible is language organization and so varied are our overt speech habits. A good imitator, as you already know, can say the same phrases in dozens of different ways, in a bass voice, in a tenor voice, in a mezzo, in a soprano, in a loud whisper, in a soft whisper, as an English cockney would say them, as a broken-English-speaking Frenchman would say them, as a Southerner would say them, as a child, etc. The number and variety of habits we form in the speaking of almost every word is thus well nigh legion. We use speech, from infancy on, a thousand times to using our hands once. From this circumstance there grows up a complexity of organization which even the psychologist seemingly cannot grasp. Again, after our overt speech habits are formed, we are constantly talking to ourselves (thought). New combinations occur, new complexities arise, new substitutions take place—for example, where the shrug of the shoulders or the movement of any other bodily part becomes substituted for a word. Soon *any, and every* bodily response *may become a word substitute.*

The alternative sometimes advanced to this theory is that so-called central processes may take place in the brain so faintly that no neural impulse passes out over the motor nerve to the muscle, hence no response takes place in the muscles and glands. Even Lashley and his students, on account of their strong interest in the nervous system, seem to hold this view. Recently Agnes M. Thorson has found that tongue movements are not universally present in internal speech. This, even if true, can have no bearing upon the present view. The tongue, while bearing very delicate receptors, is on the muscular side a bulk organ for rolling our food around. It plays a part in internal speech to be sure, but probably about the same part that the fist of the jazz cornet player plays when he thrusts it into the horn to modify the sound.

Some Positive Evidence for the Behaviorist's View

(1) Our main line of evidence comes from watching the child's behavior. The child talks incessantly when alone, as I pointed out a moment ago. At three he even plans the day aloud, as my own ear placed outside the keyhole of the nursery door has very often confirmed. Aloud he voices (may I use literary terms and not psychological ones?) his wishes, his hopes, his fears, his annoyances, his dissatisfactions with his nurse or his father. Soon society in the form of nurse and parents steps in. "Don't talk aloud—daddy and mother are not always talking to themselves." Soon the overt speech dies down to whispered speech and a good lip reader can still read what the child thinks of the world and of himself. Some individuals never even make this concession to society. When alone they talk aloud to themselves. A still larger number never go beyond even the whispering stage when alone. Watch people reading on the street car; peep through the keyhole some time when individuals not too highly socialized are just sitting and think-

ing. But the great majority of people pass on to the third stage under the influence of social pressure constantly exerted. "Quit whispering to yourself," and "Can't you even read without moving your lips?" and the like are constant mandates. Soon the process is forced to take place behind the lips. Behind these walls you can call the biggest bully the worst name you can think of without even smiling. You can tell the female bore how terrible she really is and the next moment smile and overtly pay her a verbal compliment.

(2) I have collected considerable evidence that those deaf and dumb individuals who when talking use manual movements instead of words, use the same manual responses they employ in talking, in their own thinking. But even here society forces minimal movements so that evidence of overt responses is often hard to obtain. To Dr. W. I. Thomas I am indebted for the following observation: Dr. Samuel Gridley Howe, Superintendent of the Perkins Institute and Massachusetts Asylum for the Blind, taught the deaf, dumb and blind Laura Bridgman a hand and finger language. He states (in one of the annual reports of the Institute) *that even in her dreams Laura talked to herself using the finger language with great rapidity. . . .*

How to Change Personality

Changing the personality of the sick individual—the psychopath—is the work of the physician. However badly he handles his job at present, we have to go to him when a habit breakdown occurs. If I got to the point where I could not pick up my knife or fork, if one arm became paralyzed or if I couldn't visually react to my wife and children, and a physical examination showed no organic lesion of any kind, I should hasten to my psychoanalytic friends and say: "Please, in spite of all the mean things I've said about you, help me out of this mess."

Even we "normal ones," after having looked ourselves over and decided that we'd like to slough off a few of our worst carry-overs, find that making these changes in our personalities is no easy task. Can you learn chemistry over night? To be a finished musician or artist in a year's time? It would be difficult if you only had to learn these things, but it is doubly difficult when you have to unlearn a vast organized system of old habits before you can begin to put on the new. And yet this is what the individual faces who wants a new personality. No quack can do it for you, no correspondence school can safely guide you. Almost any event or happening might start a change; a flood might do it, a death in the family, an earthquake, a conversion to the church, a breakdown in health, a fist fight—anything that would break up your present habit patterns, throw you out of your routine and put you in such a position that you would have to learn to react to objects and situations different from those to which you have had to react in the past—such happenings might start the process of building a new personality for you. During the formation of new habit systems, the old begin to die through disuse—that is, there is loss in retention and hence the individual will be less dominated by the old habit systems.

What do we have to do to change the personality? There must be both *unlearning* the things we have already learned (and the unlearning may be an active *unconditioning* process or just *disuse*) and *learning* the new things, which is always an active process. Thus the only way thoroughly to change personality is to remake the individual by changing his environment in such a way that new habits have to form. The more completely they change, the more personality changes. Few individuals can do all this unaided. That is why we go on year in and year out with the same old personality. Some day we shall have hospitals devoted to helping us change our personality because we can change the

personality as easily as we can change the shape of the nose, only it takes more time.

Language One Difficulty in the Way of Changing Personality

There is one difficulty in changing personality by changing environment, hitherto all too little thought of. It lies in the fact that when we attempt to change personality by changing the individual's external environment, we cannot prevent the individual from taking his old internal environment with him in the shape of words and word substitutes. You can take a man who has never worked in his life, who has always been the spoiled darling of his mother, who has been a constant attendant upon the ladies of the stage, a patron of the best restaurants of the city, of the fine haberdashery shops, send him to the Congo Free States and put him in a situation for making a frontier individual out of himself. But he takes with him his own language and other substitutes for the world he has left, and we saw in studying language that language, when fully developed, really gives us a manipulable replica of the world we live in. Hence, if his present world does not begin to take hold of him, as it may not, he may withdraw from his frontier world and live the rest of his life in the old substitute world of words. Such an individual may become a "shut-in"—a day dreamer.

But in spite of all the difficulties in the way, individuals can and do change their personalities. Friends, teachers, the theatres, the movies all help to make, to remake and to unmake our personalities. The man who never exposes himself to such stimuli will never change his personality for a better one.

CHAPTER 4

THE NATURE OF LANGUAGE: HOW IT GROWS

> The growth of a child's speech means a concurrent progress in the mastery of word-forms and in the acquisition of ideas. In this each of the two factors aids the other, the advance of ideas pushing the child to new uses of sounds, and the growing facility in word-formation reacting powerfully on the ideas, giving them definiteness of outline and fixity of structure.
>
> —James Sully, *Studies of Childhood*

If language possesses the values indicated in Chapter 3 as at once the instrument by which our civilization has been built and the record of its growth, as the primary mechanism of social inheritance, and as a vital element in the building of personality, then we may well give attention to some of its chief characteristics, and to the way in which it grows in the life of the individual and of the race.

We learn to speak so early in life that speaking seems as natural as breathing. We are, for the most part, as unconscious of our speech processes as we are of the circulation of the blood. Yet each of us had to learn to speak, just as surely as he had to learn to write. The process of learning to speak is long and complicated, and requires far more time and effort than is commonly realized. Its difficulty becomes apparent when we try to learn a foreign language.

Language Learned Through Imitation

The child learns language by hearing often the same word or phrase associated with the same experience. This association is repeated until the presence of the experience tends

to call up in his mind the word, or the sound of the word tends to call into consciousness a memory of the experience. The meaning of the word for him is the experience he has learned to associate with it. He experiments endlessly with his vocal mechanism until he is able to pronounce the words his ear has distinguished. Under the urge of his necessities for physical and social adjustment he soon acquires a considerable stock of words, each associated with a more or less definite experience.

The continuing association of word and experience soon establishes in his mind the presupposition that all things have names, and he bristles with the question, "What is that?" He learns in this way not only individual words, but also word groups. His process is not that of learning words and then combining them into sentences as one sometimes does in efforts to learn a foreign language, but rather that of learning words and word groups and entire sentences as expressions of his experiences and feelings. The first order of learning is, perhaps, experience followed by language equivalent, or what might be called the "thing-word" order. However, any one who has watched a child must know that he early learns by imitation, words and word groups for which he has no meanings, and that the meanings come gradually as experience broadens. This may be called the "word-thing" order.

I once walked behind two groups of children who were saying the snippiest things to each other, and having the finest time imaginable. There was no ill feeling behind the words. The children had little notion of what the words meant. They were simply exercising their language functions by imitating their elders. It was a case of "As the old birds sing, the young birds twitter." Regarded in this way, their efforts to use offensive language were both futile and amusing. The situation acquires a somewhat different value, however, when one remembers that these language forms were molds into which the plastic experiences of the children were being

poured—molds which would, to some degree, give shape to their later social attitudes and feelings of value.

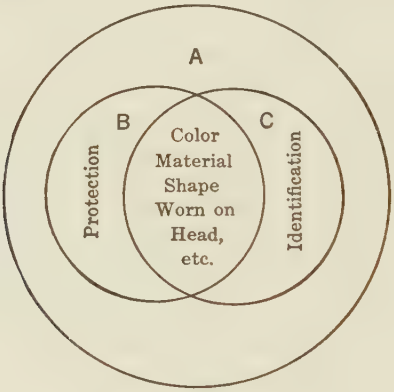
Meaning and Definition

It seems evident from what has been said that meaning is always individual. It is what comes into my mind, or your mind, or the mind of some one else, when the word is spoken, heard, read, or thought. Because the physical world around any group of people is similar, it is possible to establish the convention that a given word shall be associated with similar experiences in the minds of all the group. And because our minds work in similar ways, it is possible finally to establish a conventional meaning even for abstract words. These facts make it possible for the dictionary maker to enter the words of the vocabulary in order and place after each word a definition—a description in other words of what is usually in the mind of one who uses the word defined. But the definition is not the meaning. A definition of *snow* might have little meaning for one who had not seen snow. The meaning must be in the mind of the reader of the definition, and that meaning is given only by experience.

Even in the field of our limited group of concrete words it is often difficult for a child to make his meaning correspond to the conventional meaning of the group. The simplest experience is infinitely complicated. Convention singles out certain elements in this complicated experience as the meaning of a word, and perhaps certain other elements as the meaning of another word. A small boy watched a season of football with much interest, and played many games at home. He was especially interested in the headgear of the players. He often talked about it and always used a headgear of his own contriving when he played. Only by accident was it discovered that his meaning for the word differed from mine. Near the close of the season he saw the

players practicing on the field before the empty bleachers. He asked, "Why do the boys wear headgear when there is no one to see them?"

Perhaps the significance of that question may best be explained by a diagram. Of the total experience one has while watching a football game, we have isolated a fragment and named it *headgear*. The large circle, A, represents the total experience. It includes all the reports of the senses—sounds, colors, movements, etc. Circle B represents the limited



Variant Word Meanings

part of this complex total which we have named *headgear*. It includes as the meaning of the word all our experiences of its color, material, shape, and its function of protection. Circle C represents the boy's meaning for the word. It has in common with circle B, my meaning, the experiences of color, material, shape, etc., but it excludes the principal part of my meaning, protection, and includes meaning elements which I did not include at all, means of identification.

This incident is given to show how easy it is for us to have different meanings for words which we use to name our experiences with concrete things. All of us can recall scores

of such examples from our own experience. The trouble is that most of us never analyze our language experiences closely enough to see what they mean. If it is possible for us to use a concrete word day after day in the presence of the fact which the word is used to name, and still not realize that we have different meanings for it, you can readily see that abstract words may offer even greater difficulties.

These facts have immediate bearing upon our thinking, as well as upon our use of language in speaking and writing. One student expresses an interest in literature; another says it is "the bunk." Untrained people merely accept the two statements as differences of opinion; "There is no accounting for taste," they say. Each speaker is likely to have a slight feeling of contempt for the other. A little knowledge of this type of behavior of the human animal which we call speech —a knowledge comparable to a dog fancier's knowledge of the behavior habits of bird dogs—places these remarks in a different light. The word "literature" does not mean the same thing to the two speakers. Quite likely if these two students were asked to define the word literature, they would use much the same phraseology, and cite some of the same books to illustrate. This merely indicates how lack of knowledge of word meanings may keep us from understanding each other. The word "literature" in each case had for its meaning some faint reference to books as objective facts. But the principal element in the meaning was certain pleasing or unpleasing states of consciousness experienced by the speakers—in the case of the first student, satisfactory experiences as he read certain books; in the case of the second, unsatisfactory experiences—likely in a literature class—associated with books. As a matter of fact, the second speaker enjoys the same kind of experience enjoyed by the first. He simply has never learned to get it from what he calls books of literature.

If education has something to do with answering the ques-

tion about what kind of person you are, or with the building of a new attitude of mind to meet new conditions, then it seems to be necessary to look carefully to the meanings which you have for words. You will find that many times, when there seem to be differences of opinion among people, there are only differences in the meanings they give to words. When you find this out you have made a long step toward an intelligent adjustment to your surroundings.

Classification and Learning

The learning of language involves much more than the addition of words and word groups to the vocabulary, together with adequately considered meanings. A child may learn the word *top* as the name for a toy. If he sees another toy of somewhat different shape and color he is likely to call it a top also. He has a pet he calls "kittie"; he sees another cat of different color and immediately calls it "kittie." These facts are significant. They mean that the child recognizes certain characteristics as the marks of a group of things called tops, and certain other characteristics as marks of cats, and so on. In other words, he is able to classify things. That is the normal, necessary process by which the individual learns to know the world about him and effectively to control himself in it. It is only by this process of classifying experiences on the basis of recognized similarities that the burnt child may dread the fire in a stove of different size and shape. This is the mental process which is the basis of all knowledge. The greatest scientist uses this same process in his investigations; he has merely extended and perfected this natural response to experience. The child who does not group his experiences into these similarity groups is an imbecile. He could not learn such simple words as *man*, *dog*, *cake*. For the normal person these words name not only possible repeated experience with identical objects, but also new experiences more or less different and still similar

in significant respects. Most of the words of our language name general notions of things, acts, and relations, and could not be learned except as these general notions are formed. It seems evident that the formation of these essential general notions is greatly accelerated in the mind of the child as he learns the language. This necessary functional classification of experience goes hand in hand with the acquiring of a vocabulary, and each process assists the other.

Language is as much the occasion of a series of experiences as are men and boys and dogs. The child carries on this natural, unreflective process of classification not only with the physical objects around him, but also with language. The word *dog* pronounced by his mother and the same word pronounced by his father are two very different things. They are pronounced in different registers. The vowel in the speech of one parent may be the *o* as in *hot*, and the vowel in the speech of the other parent may be represented by the spelling "dawg." But the child recognizes the similarities and knows the word to be the same as spoken by the two.

This natural classification of the child's language experiences is carried a significant step further. Just as he learns to classify his experiences with the world of things and animals around him, just as he never expects a dog to mew or a cat to fly, so he classifies the words he uses and expects the words of the different classes to conform to the class characteristic. This, perhaps, sounds rather formidable—like something the child might be expected to learn in school. But as a matter of fact, he learns all this before he ever goes to school at all. Long before he reaches school age, he has learned that when he speaks of more than one boy he adds the sound *s* and says *boys*. So with *dog*, and *cat*, and so on. In short he has learned how to indicate plurality in nouns. This is shown by the fact that he readily says *mans* and *sheeps*, but never uses this method of indicating plurality in other parts of speech. I have just heard a five-year-old boy

say, "The one who gets the *muchest* wins." He evidently knows the use and the general forms of the adjective. We are all familiar with the queer forms which children invent for the past tenses of irregular verbs. These queer childish constructions, which often seem amusing to us, are so many indications that the child could not learn language at all if he did not classify his language experiences just as he classifies his other experiences—that these groupings are necessary, functional, and not the gratuitous imposition of the school teacher.

The early classifications of our experiences are often humorously inadequate. A small girl, who was more used to dogs than to cattle, saw a calf. She immediately classified this new experience by saying, "See the big doggie." These early, inadequate groupings must be corrected by later observation and study. In the same way, the child's early language classifications are inadequate, and must be corrected and extended. This is one reason for the study of grammar.

The natural classifications of language facts and the correction of inadequate classifications through further experience will bring the normal student up to the language level of his community. It must be remembered, of course, that this community is not geographical; it rather consists of the people with whom he is associated. A student who comes from a cultured home will use better language than one from an ignorant home, even though the homes be close together. This better language is not merely better pronunciation, and freedom from gross violations of good usage. It consists also in a wider and more accurate vocabulary and clearer thinking in the use of words and sentences. But the language level of the community of the average student is comparatively low, and it is desirable that he be enabled to rise above it.

Children learn to play by imitation in the same way that they learn to speak. But games learned in this way never

rise above the mediocre. If a school desires efficient games, if it desires to win in competitive sports, it employs a coach whose duty it is to bring the natural imitative play processes into consciousness and make them more accurate. More than average proficiency comes only as the result of the correction and extension of natural activity through conscious self direction.

These laws which are operative as a child learns language, and also those which govern language growth in the larger social unit, determine what is "correct" in oral or written speech. They are the operative evolutionary processes by which man's most distinguishing and effective social instrument has been developed. They are fundamental in all teaching processes, and they determine the necessary method of language analysis.

The Growth of Language

If each generation learns the language by imitation from the preceding generation, it might seem that language would not change. The normal, unreflective opinion is that language is static. The child thinks his meaning for a word, or his pronunciation, is "right," and that any other is "funny." But a little observation of the way we use language will indicate that it is constantly developing. The best preparation for the understanding of the history of language is to become aware of the laws which are now operative in its growth.

Language grows (1) by the addition of words to the vocabulary, (2) by the obsolescence of words, (3) by changes in word meanings, (4) by changes in word forms, and (5) by changes in grammatical habits. It seems desirable to give examples from everyday language under each of these divisions before undertaking to recount the history of the English language.

Addition of Words

The advertisements in one edition of a small country newspaper used the following words which either are not native or have acquired new meanings in recent times. From the French: *crêpe de chine, charmeuse, lisle, almonds, filberts, olives, chassis, battery.* From the Italian: *macaroni, spaghetti, vermicelli.* Japan contributed *kimono* and Hindustan *pajamas. Sunkist* and *karo* are manufactured trade names. *Victor record, film, motor, grape fruit, clean-up, prairie-schooner,* and *roquefort* come from various sources, but their present meanings are comparatively recent and easily accounted for.

A French book which I have just picked up and opened at random shows on one page the following words: *famille, affaire, investigation, occupé, ordinairement, inventive, charmante.* These words immediately suggest their English equivalents.

It seems evident that we add to the resources of the vocabulary by making new words from the native elements, or by borrowing from some other language. The tendency to create new words and new word forms may be noticed in the language history of any child. A small boy carried a stick which he used to stop his car. He called it his "whoa-stick" because it enabled him "to whoa." Following the genius of the language he had invented a new infinitive and a new compound. The same boy was much interested in the geysers in the Yellowstone National Park. As he approached one he asked, "Do you think it is about ready to geyse?" Here he reversed the history of the word *geyser* and remade the original verb from which the noun is derived, the Icelandic *Geysa,* to rush forth. Another small boy was left to take care of his baby sister. When his mother returned he reported, "Gee, Mother, she does all the don'ts." One boy's relish for some cherries led him to say

of the cook, "She sure is a good putter up." This shift of words from one part of speech to another by simple derivation is in strict accordance with the habits of the language. It has given us *to junk* from the noun *junk*, meaning old rope. The list would be endless, but a few such transfers may be noted: *to board, to room, to clerk, to dump, to man* the boat, etc.

The rapid development of the sciences and arts during the past few years has made necessary many new words. Some recent inventions have taken the name of the inventor: Ford, Edison, Pullman. Others have been named by compounding native words: steam-engine, railway. Still others have been named by compounding foreign words: automobile, osteopathy, telegram.

Obsolescence of Words and Change in Meanings

Language grows by the dropping of useless words. In my boyhood, I knew a reaper which did not bind the grain, but dropped it in bunches. It was called a *dropper*. Progress in mechanical ingenuity has made the machine useless and the word is obsolete in that sense. So far as I have heard during the past several years, the word *surrey*, which we used to know, has met with similar fate. A little reading of Chaucer or of Shakespeare will furnish a long list of words which are no longer used.

The words of the language are constantly shifting their meanings as new demands are made upon them. These shifting meanings are not necessarily the same in all parts of the English-speaking world. It sometimes happens that a word takes one meaning in one part of the English-speaking world and a different meaning in another part—with startling results. A young man from the northern states visiting in the South might be astonished when requested to *carry* his hostess to the theater. He might be even more astonished when asked to *carry* the horse to water.

A three-year-old boy helped his mother pick the withered flowers from the plants in the flower bed. The next day he told me about it. He did not know the word *withered*. His statement was, "We picked the *worn* flowers." This imaginative transfer of a known word to a new and unnamed experience does not differ in essence from the conscious process of Alfred Noyes when he wrote the line,

> "When the censers of the roses o'er the forest-aisles are shaken."

Because most of the words of our vocabulary have their present meanings as the result of a similar imaginative shift, the language is sometimes called "fossil poetry." Some have deduced from this fact the idea that early peoples were more imaginative than their more civilized descendents. The deduction is not legitimate. The illusion perhaps arose from a telescoping of linguistic history with the resulting impression that the numberless imaginative transfers combined in one language occurred within a few generations.

Many who have become conscious of this imaginative use of language only in poetry assume that poets alone use words in this way. The following quotation from Professor William Patten's *The Grand Strategy of Evolution* will, perhaps, correct that assumption:

"From the sun, the earth its substance inherited, and received in her household its nurture. In communion with its mother, sun, and with its twin sister, moon, the foetal earth acquired its form, its features, and its motions; was cradled in its orbit, bathed by the recurrent light of day, disciplined and caressed by the changing seasons, till the initial cleavage of its growing substance divided the assembling airs, the lands, and the waters, into serried layers and graded masses, according to their attributes."

Perhaps the largest part of the vocabulary of a primitive people consists of words which name concrete things and

acts, things and acts of which one may become aware through the senses. As more abstract and subjective ideas were slowly developed, these concrete words were transferred to name them. *Virtue* comes from a Latin word meaning "man." *Virtue* meant manly qualities. At the time when the ideal of manhood was the soldier, the word meant strength. Today, with a higher ideal of what a man should be, the word has come to mean some of the characteristics of that other ideal. The word *understand* now refers to a mental process. It evidently originally referred to a physical relation, to stand under a thing, to be in control of it. When we speak of "deep feeling" we have transferred the word *deep* from an objective physical relation to a subjective relation.

A result of this tendency to extend the meanings of words is that few words in any language have one meaning and one alone. Sometimes one of the possible meanings of a word is uppermost and sometimes another. Frequently the original meaning entirely vanishes, leaving only the derived meanings. For instance, the word *manufacture* comes from words which meant "to make with the hands." Manufactured things were contrasted with things which grew. After a time the idea of making predominated and the idea of the manner of production was lost. When machine processes supplanted hand processes, the word gradually passed over to the new methods. In time the word came to designate machine processes as opposed to hand processes, and now we frequently oppose the words *hand-made* and *manufactured*. *Corn*, in England, is the general word for small grain. When the English came to America and found Indian maize, they called it corn. Gradually the other uses of the word disappeared and now, for us, corn and wheat are very different things. Many Americans, when they read in English poetry about the poppies among the corn, visualize an

American corn field and add a few poppies—which is, to say the least, a rather inadequate interpretation of the phrase.

There is a tendency, the opposite of the one we have just noted, to restrict the meanings of words. It is illustrated in the life of the child when he learns to restrict the overworked word *papa* to its rightful owner. *Doctor* is derived from a word which means "to teach." It meant formerly a learned man. We have now, in popular speech, restricted it to one learned in medicine, to a physician. *Physician*, itself, originally meant "one learned in the ways of nature." We have restricted its meaning and now apply it exclusively to one who prescribes for our physical ills—for a fee. Similarly, the various sciences have restricted the meanings of common words to fit their special subject-matter. The words, *round*, *straight*, and *square* were common words in English long before they were given scientific definition in mathematics. It must be remembered that they still preserve their older general meanings along with those fixed by science. This is a fact that is sometimes overlooked by those who object to the perfectly correct forms *rounder*, *straighter*, etc.

The word *battery* comes from a French word meaning "to beat," and is not a new word in English. As early as 1748 there is mention of a "battery of Drums." But the present meaning belongs to the age of electricity. An old English play represents one character as saying to another, "You have no batteries in Thy head, to signify Th' art a constable." The speech sounds like a bit of modern slang, but in fact the word *batteries* here seems to mean bruises, signs of *batterie*!

Changes in Word Forms

Change in word form suggests to most students change in spelling. But the word form is the sound we hear when some one speaks the word, or the sound together with the

whole complex of muscular effort when we speak it ourselves. Spelling may mark an accomplished change in form, but not necessarily so. For instance, there are four entries in the dictionary for *to*, *too*, *of*, and *off*. Yet *to* and *too* are, historically, the same word, and so are *of* and *off*. More or less by accident the custom developed of spelling the emphatic word *t-o-o*, to indicate the emphasis. Then gradually the two forms took slightly different meanings. The same thing is true of *of* and *off*. Many words of the language take different forms as they occur in emphatic or unemphatic positions in the sentence, though their spelling remains the same. *Her*, for example, is always spelled in the same way—except in attempts at dialect—though no one would pronounce the words alike in the two sentences: "What! Did you ask *her* to come!" and "Tell her to get her hat and come on."

A given word, with no change in spelling or meaning, may take different forms in different ages or among widely separated peoples. Most of us are familiar with the New England *idear* and the southern *watah*. The sportive calf must be much confused by his name as the vowel shifts from the *a* in *at* almost to the *a* in *all*. We also remember that in earlier English poetry *wind* rhymed with *mind*, and *oil* with *isle*.

When Polly put the kettle on and we all took tea, Sukey took it off again because they'd all gone away. The rhyming vowel in that old couplet is the one which we now call the long *a*. The same vowel occurred in such words as *sea*, *meat*, *beat*. This pronunciation is still found occasionally, along with *deef* for deaf, *obleeged*, for obliged, and *heerd* for heard. It seems somewhat inconsistent to pay large prices for doubtful antique furniture, and at the same time to condemn these genuine vocal survivals from the first families of Colonial days!

The social snobbery which has given *vulgar* its present meaning has led many to feel that what is common in pro-

nunciation is not quite fitting for the socially elect. In the eighteenth century *ask, grass, glass, last, aunt*, were pronounced with the flat *a*. Later it became "the thing" to use the broad *a* in these words, though the custom has not become generally established in America. The early flat *a* is still sometimes heard in *psalm, calm, balm*, etc., though the broad *a* is more common. There has been recently an attempt to force the broad *a* into *vase* and *tomato*, and with more success into *drama* and *amen*. One wonders why the attempt has not been made to force it into the word *potato*.

Foreign words brought into the English language frequently undergo a change in pronunciation to make them correspond more closely to the genius of the language. This is almost universally true of early importations. *Depot* has preserved the final *o*, but it has changed the value of the *e* and shifted the accent to the first syllable. Until perhaps the second quarter of the nineteenth century, *balcony* and *contemplate* were accented bal co′ ny and con tem′ plate. The attitude of the purist toward any change in the language as he learned it, even though the change be in strict accord with the genius of the language, is illustrated by the comment of Samuel Rogers, "Con′ template is bad enough, but bal′ cony makes me sick."

If opinion might be allowed in the matter, it would be that all foreign words should be immediately Englished in pronunciation. Our attempts to conform to what we fondly suppose to be the foreign pronunciation are ludicrously inadequate and inconsistent. Many of us are quite fastidious about the pronunciation of a few foreign words to which our attention has been called, but we readily give the English pronunciation to others of the same general class.

Words often pronounced together frequently become fused or telescoped. In the speech of most children, *hide 'n seek* is one word. *Although, another, alone, already*, are examples. *Alright* seems, for some reason, not to have established

itself, nor has *tother* which was formerly used. Sometimes one finds in earlier writing "the tother," showing that the writer had no feeling that *tother* contained the article.

Analogy accounts for many changes in word form. A small boy had skates which could be made longer or shorter. He boasted one day that most boys and girls could not *longen* their skates. The next day he asked his father to *lowen* his foot. These forms were perhaps due to the analogy of some such words as *harden* and *shorten.* The same language habit gave the forms *hisen, hern, theirn* by analogy with *mine* and *thine. Could* is the earlier *coude,* the intruded *l,* perhaps, due to the analogy of *should.*

Having in mind these recent changes in word forms and word meanings, at a time when the school, literature, and universal travel tend to preserve language forms and meanings, we can readily see that the changes effected during the fifteen hundred years since the coming of the Anglo-Saxons to England would almost equal the formation of a new language. If, as in our own country, these dialectic divergences in no way interfere with the interchange of ideas, they are not disadvantageous. One part of the country cannot be said to speak a better language than another, nor can the pronunciation of the educated people of one section be said to be better than that of the educated people of another section. But it would be a misfortune if our language were to change so rapidly that the writings of our predecessors should become unintelligible to us. It would be an even greater misfortune if the instrument of racial growth were to become dulled, or the channels for the free circulation of our growing racial culture were to become clogged.[1]

It is easy to see that our vocabulary is growing, and that word meanings and word forms are changing all the time. Grammatical changes take place more slowly and are more difficult to observe. As historical questions necessarily enter

[1] See Janet Rankin Aiken, *English Present and Past,* The Ronald Press Company, 1930.

in when changes in grammar are discussed, they will be described later in this chapter after the history of the English language has been reviewed.

The Story of the English Language—Origins

All these forces which make for change have been playing upon the English language during its entire history. A brief survey of the chief historical events which have affected our language—its vocabulary, its word forms, its word meanings, and its grammar—will, therefore, have considerable interest, and will indicate the cultural relations of English-speaking peoples with the rest of the world.

The Aryan or Indo-European language is the source from which have descended the languages of the Persians and Hindoos as well as those of the Greeks, Romans, Celts, Slavs, Teutons, etc. Where the people lived who spoke the original Aryan is doubtful. The current view seems to place their home in the southern steppes of Russia.[2] From this early home, wherever it was, migrating tribes carried the language to southern Asia and over most of Europe.

Perhaps the earliest of these tribes to come into western Europe were the Celts. Modern representatives of the Celts live along the west coast of Europe and in the western and northern parts of the British Isles. The Italic and Hellenic tribes carried the language into Italy and Greece, and the Slavs into eastern and northern Europe. The Teutonic tribes pushed the Celts to the west coasts and developed the languages we now know as German, Dutch, Danish, Norwegian, Swedish, Icelandic, English, etc.

The English language is thus seen to be a recent fruiting on the ancient Aryan stem. It is interesting to follow the workings of linguistic laws as they have forged from the crude speech brought to England in 499 A.D., the greatest instrument of civilization the world has produced.

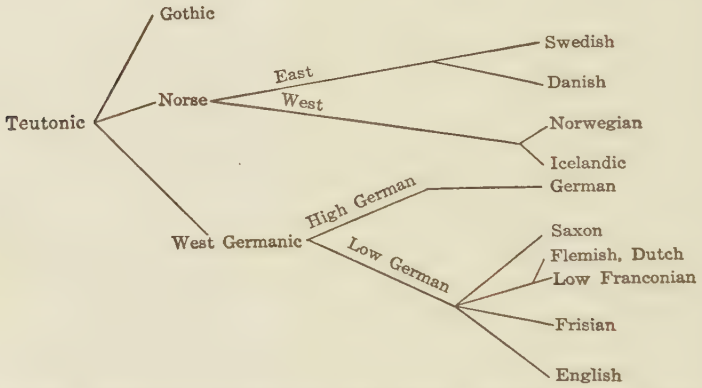
[2] L. P. Smith, *The English Language*, Henry Holt & Co., 1912, p. 129.

			Spoken dialects of:
INDO-EUROPEAN	1. Indo-Iranian		India, Afghanistan, Persia, Kurdistan, Baluchistan
	2. Armenian		Armenia
	3. Hellenic	Greek	Greece
	4. Albanian		Albania
	5. Italic	Latin	Portugal, Spain, Provence, France, Italy, Roumania
	6. Celtic		Wales, Brittany, Scotland, Ireland, Isle of Man
	7. Balto-Slavic		Bulgaria, Russia, Poland, The Serbo-Croatians, The Letts
	8. Teutonic	High German	Germany
		Low German	England, Holland, Frisland
		Scandinavian	Denmark, Norway, Iceland, Sweden

A chart showing the eight families of the Indo-European language and their chief modern representatives

The earliest inhabitants of the British Isles of whom we have any definite historical record were the Celts. These tribes have as their modern representatives the Irish, Welsh, and highland Scotch. While these peoples have been conquered by the English and most of them speak a dialect of the English language, remnants of the original Celtic are to be found in the more remote parts of the islands.

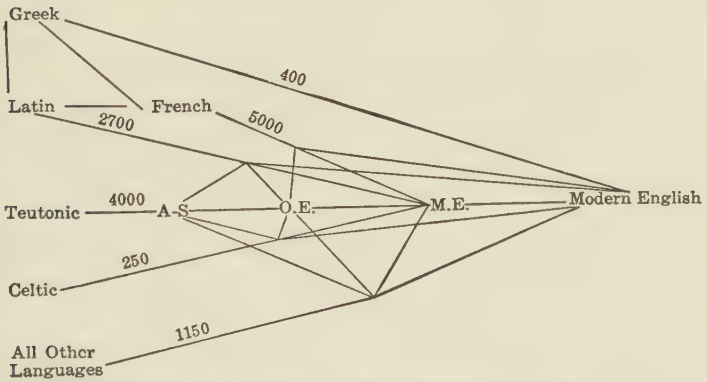
In 55 B.C., the Romans under Caesar, after conquering what is now France, first came into England. About one



A chart showing the relation of the English language to the other chief members of the Teutonic family of languages

hundred years later they established themselves in the island and organized it as a Roman province. For three hundred years, or as long as English-speaking people have occupied America, the Romans held the southern and eastern parts. During this time Christianity was introduced into England and also into Ireland and Scotland. A highly civilized people, such as the Romans, could not occupy a land three hundred years without having great influence upon the inhabitants, though that influence was felt chiefly by those who dwelt in the towns. They built roads, baths, and walled cities,

remains of which may still be seen. Museums as far north as that of York are full of Roman relics—such as cooking utensils, jewelry, and farm implements—which have come to light in recent times. When the Romans withdrew in 410 A.D., they left the people unable to defend themselves against the Picts and Scots from the west and the north. These



A chart showing the sources of the chief contributions to modern English

An early edition of Skeat's Etymological Dictionary, which confines itself to primary words, contains about 13,500 entries. Of these, 4,000 are of Teutonic origin, 5,000 are from the French, 2,700 come direct from the Latin, 400 from the Greek, about 250 from the Celtic, and the remaining 1,150 from all other languages. Most of the other 400,000 entries in a modern English dictionary have been obtained by derivation from these 13,500 primary words.

savage tribes overran the country as far as Kent and seem to have destroyed effectually most of the Roman civilization.

As early as the middle of the fourth century, the Teutonic tribes from the continent began to make considerable forays into the island. These tribes were the Angles, Saxons, Jutes, and Frisians, who dwelt in the lowlands of Germany and in what is now Denmark. By the middle of the fifth century they had begun that conquest of the island which was to make the language English and the people Teutonic

rather than Celtic. According to the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, it was 449 A.D. that Horsa and Hengist and their followers made the first permanent Teutonic settlement upon the coast of Kent. During the next three or four hundred years, these people made themselves masters of all the southern and eastern parts of the island and made theirs the dominant language.

Anglo-Saxon Period

The dialects brought to England by the Teutonic tribes, the original of modern English, were crude and meager in vocabulary. They were spoken by a few small tribes and the dialect of one tribe was all but unintelligible to the members of other tribes. There is now, perhaps, less difference between the speech of educated English-speaking residents of London, Chicago, Edinburgh, Sydney, and Calcutta than there was in the ninth century between the speech of London and that of York. The manner of the growth of this, the greatest comparatively uniform language the world has seen, is full of interest. At least the essential features of this growth should be comparatively familiar to all English-speaking people.

The history of the English language is frequently divided into periods, as follows:

I. Anglo-Saxon, 450 A.D. to 1150.
II. Old English, 1150 to 1350.
III. Middle English, 1350 to 1550.
IV. Modern English, 1550 to the present.

These dates in themselves have no particular meaning, but, falling as they do in the middle of the fifth, twelfth, fourteenth, and sixteenth centuries, they are easily remembered, and they mark with some accuracy the coming of the Teutonic tribes, the end of Anglo-Saxon literature about

one hundred years after the Norman Conquest, the rise of English again to the dignity of a literary tongue at the time of Chaucer, and the period of the English Renaissance—all important events in the history of the language.

The Vocabulary

Though the tribes which came from the continent to the island in the fifth century spoke different dialects, the term Anglo-Saxon is usually applied to the language of all the Teutons in England from their coming to about 1150. The Anglo-Saxon vocabulary was, of course, largely Teutonic, with perhaps a slight infusion of Latin words. We do not know how these early Englishmen spoke, for our records of their language begin only after some hundreds of years of residence in England. But the earliest records we possess show words and usages which seem very queer to us. A student in those days was a *leorningcniht*, a learning-boy. Evidently there were no learning-girls then!

The Anglo-Saxons were a warlike, seafaring people and there are many words in their language for war and for the sea. Among other words for the sea are *hronrad*, whale-road; *bæthweg*, bath-way; and *merestræt*, sea-way.

It has always been the custom in English to compound words easily. *Wīg*, war, and *plega*, play, gave *wīgplega*, meaning war-play. *Eard*, land, gave *eardstappa*, land-stepper or wanderer. *Hildenædre* was war-adder, or arrow. *Healf*, half, and *cwic*, alive, gave *healfcwic* meaning half-alive, or we say half-dead.

The word *merestræt* (*mere* plus *strǽt* from the Latin *strata*) suggests that the Latin influence on the language of the Teutonic invaders of the British Isles began early, perhaps before they left the continent. Such English names as Chester, Manchester, Lancaster, indicate that the Latin *castra*, camp, had entered into place names during the Ro-

man occupation, and that these place names were taken over by the Teutonic invaders.

The following extract in Anglo-Saxon, Latin, and modern English will show something of the growth of the language.[3]

Fæder	ure,	thu	the	eart	on	heofenum,	si	thin	nama
Pater	*noster,*	*tu*	*qui*	*es*	*in*	*cælis,*	*sit*	*tuum*	*nomen*
Father	our,	thou	that	art	in	heavens,	be	thy	name

gehalgod,	tobecume	thin	rice,	geweorthe	thin	willa
sanctum,	*adveniat*	*tuum*	*regnum,*	*fiat*	*tua*	*voluntas*
hallowed,	come	thy	kingdom,	be done	thy	will

on eorthan,	swaswa	on heofenum.	Urne	dæghwamlican	hlaf
in terra,	*sicut*	*in cælis.*	*Nostrum*	*quotidianum*	*panem*
on earth,	as	in heavens.	Our	daily	bread

syle	us	to dæg,	and	forgyf	us	ure	gyltas,	swaswa	we
da	*nobis*	*hodie,*	*et*	*remitte*	*nobis*	*nostra*	*debita,*	*sicut*	*nos*
give	us	to-day,	and	forgive	us	our	debts,	as	we

forgifath	urum	gyltendum.	And	ne	gelæde	thu	us	on
remittimus	*nostris*	*debitoribus.*	*Et*	*ne*	*inducas*	*tu*	*nos*	*in*
forgive	our	debtors.	And	not	lead	thou	us	into

costnunge,	ac	alys	us	of	yfle.	Sothlice.
tentationem,	*at*	*libera*	*nos*	*a*	*malo.*	*Amen.*
temptation,	but	deliver	us	from	evil.	Amen.

The Grammar

Anglo-Saxon was a highly inflected language. Inflection is the modification of a word to indicate its relation to other words in the sentence, or to indicate time, mood, number, person, or gender. Inflection is usually terminal, *boy, boys,* but sometimes it is a change in a root vowel, *man, men.* These internal changes are usually the effects of older terminal inflections which have now disappeared. When the words of a language have many possible inflected forms the language is said to be highly inflected—it is a synthetic language. Latin and Greek are highly inflected languages,

[3] Adapted from Paul Crouzet and Armand Fournier, *Du Latin à L'Anglaise, Toulouse,* Privat Didier, 1929.

as is modern German to a less degree, and French still less. Modern English is an analytical language and has comparatively few inflections.

The Introduction of Christianity

The first significant change in the language of the Teutonic invaders after they came to England was the result of the introduction of Christianity. It is to be remembered that Christianity had been brought to the island before the withdrawal of the Romans. It was perhaps reintroduced by the Celts from Ireland after the incursion of the non-Christian Teutons. In 597, Saint Augustine and his monks came to Canterbury.

During the following centuries missionaries from Rome, together with others from Ireland and Scotland, established monasteries and schools, and taught the Latin of the Bible and of the Church Fathers. Many words came into the language as the result of this religious and scholastic conversion of the people. These words were, for the most part, connected with religion: *apostle, bishop, canon, font, martyr, nun, pope, temple, altar, anthem, psalm.*

There were other words introduced at this time from the Latin, such as *aloes, balsam, beet, cedar, fig, lettuce, lily, mint, radish.* It may be supposed that some of these plants were introduced into the island at the time, and that the natives first became familiar with them under their Latin names.

It was not by the addition of new words to the native vocabulary, however, that the English language was most significantly affected as a result of the introduction of religion and learning. The introduction of new ideas and manners demanded that old words become new, that their meanings be extended to express new ideas, that combinations be made to take the place of Latin words for which there were

no English equivalents. Professor T. N. Toller says, "The conditions of knowledge, then, among the English, whether that knowledge were gained by intercourse with books or with men, must have been very different from that which would have prevailed had Christianity not come to them, and this difference implies that the language must have been very different from that which would have served their needs, had they remained outside the Christian pale.[4]

Efforts to translate the literature of Christianity into Anglo-Saxon produced some picturesque words which might well have been preserved instead of the Latin forms which have supplanted them: such as *clænsung* (cleansing) for purification, *heah-fæder* (high-father) for patriarch, *dæg-red-sang* (day-red-song, dawn-song) for matins, *æfen-sang* (even-song) for vespers.

In the ninth century, the Scandinavian tribes, the Northmen or Norsemen, overran almost the whole of Europe. In northern France they settled in what is now Normandy and took on something of the French culture along with the French language. In England they burned and pillaged the monasteries of the north and destroyed the most famous seats of learning. When Alfred came to the throne in 871, he was able to drive them back to the north of the Thames and to rescue the remnants of English learning and literature. During the tenth and eleventh centuries, the Danes and the native English fused into one people with one language, and that language was still the English.

The Danes were closely akin to the people among whom they settled, and few words were added to the English vocabulary as a result of the invasion. Among these, however, are some very familiar words: law, shift, outlaw, riding, arrow, boat-swain, steersman, husband, earl, thrall, call,

[4] T. N. Toller, *Outlines of the History of the English Language*, The Macmillan Company, 1900, p. 77.

knife, to egg (on), fellow, hit, a-loft, skin, take, tidings, wrong.

The Normans in England

The most important conquest of England after the coming of the Teutonic tribes was that made by the Norman French, in 1066. The Normans were Northmen who had settled in France during the ninth century, and they were kinsmen to the Danes who had settled in England about the same time. William, Duke of Normandy, laid claim to the English throne and made his claim good by conquering Harold, making himself king of England, and distributing the land to his followers. The Normans brought with them the French language, and the learning and literature of the continent. French became the language of the court and of polite society, and Latin the language of the school and of learning. French literature became the model for English literary efforts and much of it was translated into English. Though French was the language of the nobles, the common people still spoke their native tongue, and, as the French gradually became naturalized, English again became the language of all the people of the island—English, but a language greatly changed from that spoken by the people of the island before the Conquest.

The extension of the English vocabulary as a result of the Norman Conquest was great. French is a Romance language, derived from the fusion of the native language of the inhabitants of what is now France with the Latin language of their Roman conquerors. Much of this Latin element was brought into the English language as the result of the coming of the Normans.

The manner in which French words were taken into English is indicated in the first chapter of *Ivanhoe*. Wamba and Gurth have been bemoaning the hardships which the Nor-

mans put upon the Saxons, and Wamba predicts that the swine they are tending bid fair to be turned into Normans before morning.

"The swine turned Normans to my comfort!" quoth Gurth; "Expound that to me, Wamba, for my brain is dull, and my mind too vexed to read riddles."

"Why, how call you these grunting brutes running about on their four legs?" demanded Wamba.

"Swine, fool, swine," said the herd, "every fool knows that."

"And swine is good Saxon," said the Jester; "but how call you the sow when she is flayed, and drawn, and quartered, and hung up by the heels, like a traitor?"

"Pork," answered the swineherd.

"I am very glad every fool knows that too," said Wamba, "and pork, I think, is good Norman French; and so when the brute lives and is in the charge of a Saxon slave, she goes by her Saxon name; but becomes a Norman, and is called pork, when she is carried to the Castle-hall to feast among the nobles; what do'st thou think of this, friend Gurth, ha?"

"It is but too true doctrine, friend Wamba, however it got into thy Fool's pate."

"Nay, I can tell you more," said Wamba, in the same tone; "there is old Alderman Ox who continues to hold his Saxon epithet while he is under the charge of serfs and bondsmen such as thou, but becomes Beef, a fiery French gallant, when he arrives before the worshipful jaws that are destined to consume him. Mynheer Calf, too, becomes Monsieur Veau (veal) in the like manner."

And so it was that where one word had done duty for the Saxon before the Conquest, afterward there were often two. Since a language seldom if ever retains two words with exactly the same meaning, the original meaning was divided

between the two. In some cases the new word entirely replaced the old so that there was no gain in expressive power. It is due to some such process as this that the English language has its great wealth of synonyms and near synonyms, and its power of quick and easy distinction.

The English After Chaucer

By the time of Chaucer (1340-1400), three hundred years after the Conquest, a renovated English had become the literary and official language of the country. It is not to be supposed, however, that the language of the entire country was uniform. A book entitled *Polychronicon*, written by Ralph Higden in the fourteenth century, gives an account of the English language at that time:

"Englishe men, they thei hadde from the bygynnynge thre manere speche, northerne, sowtherne, and middel speche in the myddel of the lond, as they came of thre manere peple of Germania, notheles by comyxtioun and mellynge [mixing] firste withe Danes and afterward with Normans, in meny the contray [country] longage is apayred [corrupted], and som useth straunge wlafferynge, chiterynge [chattering], harrynge, and garrynge grisbaything [snarling, howling, gnashing of teeth]."

The reasons for this condition, according to Higden, were that children in school had to do their lessons in French, and that the children of gentlemen were taught French, and 'uplondisshe' men tried to make themselves more thought of by speaking French. Further he says:

"Al the longage of the Nurthhumbres, and specialliche at York, is so scharp, slitting, and frotynge [harsh] and unshape, that we southerne men may that longage uneathe [scarcely] understande."

Within less than a hundred years after the death of Chaucer occurred an event which has had far-reaching effects

upon the development of the English language. Literature has always been a conservator of language. But so long as books were duplicated by hand they were necessarily rare and their influence limited. Sometime between 1471 and 1476, Caxton brought the printing press to Westminster. The means of more rapid duplication of books made their influence more widely felt and tended to make language forms more stable. Concerning this century of the introduction of printing into England, J. W. H. Atkins says:

"The all important feature of the development of English during the pre-Chaucerian period consisted of those grammatical changes which entirely altered the organic character of the language. From being a highly inflected language, it became one partially stripped of inflections; whereas its changes in vocabulary during the same period, though important in themselves, were far less radical in their effects. After 1400, the order of importance is reversed. It was a change in the vocabulary, particularly in that of the sixteenth century, which made almost all the difference; the grammatical structure was modified but in a comparatively slight degree."[5]

Since the Norman Conquest no foreign-speaking people have ever gained a foothold in the island. This does not mean, however, that the influx of foreign words ceased. During the sixteenth century the intellectual life of England was stimulated by what has come to be called the Renaissance. English students went to the continent to study, and English schools gave special emphasis to the Greek and Latin classics. English books contained many words and phrases from foreign languages. A large part of the present English vocabulary of music, art, and poetry came into the

[5] J. W. H. Atkins, *The Cambridge History of English Literature*, "The Language from Chaucer to Shakespeare," G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1909, Vol. III.

language from the continent, especially from Italy, at this time. English explorers came home with new and strange articles of commerce, and their foreign names.

Though the most far-reaching changes in the language were already accomplished by the time of Chaucer, and though it again became the language of literature, the school, and the court during the last half of the fourteenth century, still its forms were far from being fixed and uniform. Latin continued to be the language of learning. As late as 1582, Richard Mulcaster in his *Elementarie*, felt it necessary to protest against the general neglect of the native tongue, and to make a plea for its cultivation.

"For our natural tung being as beneficiall vnto vs for our nedeful deliuerie, as anie other is to the peple which vse it: & hauing as pretie, and as fair obseruations in it, as anie other hath: and being as readie to yield to anie rule of Art, as anie other is: why should I not take som pains to find out the right writing of ours, as tother cuntrimen haue don to find the like in theirs? & so much the rather, bycause it is pretended, that the writing thereof is meruellous vncertain, and scant to be recouered from extreme confusion, without som charge of as great extremitie? I mean therefor so to deall in it, as I maie wipe awaie that opinion of either vncertaintie for confusion, or impossibilitie for direction, that both the naturall English maie haue wherein to rest, and the desirous st(r)anger maie haue whereby to learn."

English in America

When our English-speaking ancestors came to America they brought with them the English language—on the one hand, the language of literature and the schools, and on the other, the colloquial speech of the part of England from which they came. Since the separation of the two peoples,

the language of each has developed new meanings for words, new vocabulary, and new pronunciations. It is very evident that these changes would occur more rapidly on the levels of colloquial speech than on the levels of formal, literary language. The result of these changes is that the language of America differs in some respects from that of England, but fundamentally the language of the two peoples is one language.

When the English came to America they found here plants and animals with which they were not acquainted and for which they had no names. They also found a new people with strange customs and artifacts. It was natural that Indian names for many of these new experiences should be adopted. Among these new words we find: *moccasin, tomahawk, wigwam, hickory, squash, caribou, skunk, raccoon, calumet.* They developed English compounds as translations of other Indian words: *war-paint, war-path, pale-face, pipe-of-peace, medicine-man, fire-water.*

New ways of living in a new climatic environment produced new language elements: *back-log, roasting-ear, pine-knot, apple-butter, snow-plow.*

English settlers in the New World early came into contact with the Spanish and borrowed many words from them: *creole, palmetto, calaboose, barbacue, pickaninny, quadroon.* Later, upon the settlement of the southwest, other words were taken from the Spanish: *lariat, lasso, canyon, adobe, bronco, rodeo, ranch, sombrero, corral, desperado.* We have also taken *to vamoose* and *to savvy.*

The settlement of the West gave many new English compounds: *pay-dirt, pan-out, prairie-schooner, round-up, grub-stake.* Railroading in America has developed a large vocabulary which is different from the vocabulary of the English railroad operatives: *box-car, diner, sleeper, cow-catcher, caboose,* etc.

The English Language Today

English is now spoken by about 180,000,000 people. Perhaps three-fourths of the world's mail is addressed in English, and one-half of the world's newspapers are printed in English. We have followed briefly the growth of the vocabulary as it created or borrowed words and changed their forms and meanings to meet the needs of a developing civilization. We can now follow, even more briefly, some of the grammatical changes which have occurred since King Alfred started the custom of studying English grammar in the schools.

The inflectional system of modern English is very much simpler than that of Anglo-Saxon. This simplicity is the result of a slow process, a process of which the actual users of the language were entirely unconscious. The Danish invasion destroyed learning over a large part of the island, and brought in a large number of foreigners who learned the language orally, and it was, perhaps, an early cause of this simplification by the loss of inflections. It was during the three hundred years after the Norman Conquest that the most rapid loss of flexioned forms took place. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle preserved many of the older forms well into the twelfth century, but when English again became the language of literature and the schools in the time of Chaucer it was greatly changed, though still much more highly inflected than modern English.

The causes of the loss of inflections were, of course, various. One of them seems to have been the mingling of races. The attempt of foreigners to learn the language, and possibly the influence of the French language, led to the shifting of word emphasis from the final inflectional syllable to the root of the word. The resulting uninflected final syllable was naturally slurred. In our present speech we seldom dis-

tinguish between the final syllables in *-er* and *-or*. Many of us drop the final *-g* in words ending in *-ing*. The same carelessness which leads us today to slur these sounds led years ago to the final reducing of all inflectional endings to one form. Almost the only ending which resisted was the harsh and unmistakable *-s*. Another tendency is to inflect a new word in the same manner as similar familiar words are inflected. The child learns the forms, *boys, dogs*, and *hats*, and expects the forms, *mans* and *sheeps*. As foreigners learned the language they naturally inflected new words according to the analogy of known words, and so hastened the dropping of inflections. The great influx of foreign words during and after the Norman period tended to unify the inflectional system, for most new words came to be inflected according to the dominant inflectional forms, or else scarcely inflected at all. Since these words make up a large part of our present vocabulary, it is but natural that our language should be more uniform than that of our fathers.

Aside from the simplification of the flectional system, the English language during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries very greatly extended its phrasal possibilities.

With the falling away of inflections, word order and phrasal forms became much more important in showing word relations in the sentence. Under the influence of French, perhaps, the century before Chaucer saw wide extension of English phrasal forms. For instance, the Anglo-Saxon *æt* expressed nearness in time and place. In modern English *at* expresses many subtle relations in such phrases as *at ease, at command, at sight, at repose, at large, at least, at last*. These extensions of the use of this preposition indicate the general growth of the language in phrasal power.

The dropping of inflections and the consequent or coincident extension of phrasal forms and of the expressive value of word order were effected during the centuries when the

language was free from the crystallizing influence of the school. It is scarcely probable that the language could have reached its present grammatical simplicity had not the Danes destroyed the scholastic traditions of Northumbria and Mercia, and the Normans kept the language plastic another three hundred years by making French and Latin the languages of literature and the school. This freedom from the congealing influence of conscious tradition through centuries of intellectual ferment is unique with English. It resembles the lengthened period of youth in man, which permits the building up of effective interpretive complexes for his control in a wide field of later activity. It permitted the prolonged free play of the evolutionary discipline which was necessary to produce a language organism capable of infinite adjustment to the demands to be made upon it.

It has been popular for some time to describe the loss of inflection by a figure of speech, and to speak of the "poverty of inflection in English." Now, the figure is somewhat unfortunate; *poverty* usually suggests something unpleasant and to be regretted. But poverty of fleas is good for a dog. And this absence of inflectional forms is one of the great elements of strength in modern English.

In Anglo-Saxon the idea of plurality, that we are speaking about more than one object, might be indicated by the adjective, the noun, and the verb in a single sentence. This is useless, and hinders expression. We have no difficulty whatever in understanding the number in the sentences, "The tall boy ran," and "The tall boys ran." Yet here the idea of number is indicated only once. The only verbal inflection to indicate number in modern English is in the third person, singular number, present tense of the active form, and even that has no expressional value. In fact, so far as the negative of *do* is concerned, popular speech has discarded it. "He don't" is heard more often than "He doesn't," even

among university faculties. And no one could object to the first form on the ground of lack of clearness.

Another popular statement about our uninflected language is that English is a "grammarless tongue." Nothing could be much farther from the truth. The inflectional system of a language is perhaps the most important feature of books of grammar, especially grammars written to induct pupils into the mysteries of a foreign tongue. The study of inflections is the simplest and easiest kind of language study, for it is mostly a matter of memory. But grammar has to do with many things besides inflection. English offers plenty of material for the student of grammar, and a close study of the vernacular is among the most vital of educational processes.

The following extracts from earlier English literature will show how different modern English is from fifteenth century English. The character ȝ has the value of *y* or *g* in these extracts. The character þ (thorn) has the value of *th*.

VRBANITATIS (About 1460)

Who-so wylle of nurtur lere,
Herken to me & ȝe shalle here,
When þou comeste be-fore a lorde
In halle, yn bowre, or at þe borde,
Hoode or Kappe þou of þo.
Ere þou come hym alle vn-to,
Twyse or þryse with-owten dowte
To þat lorde þou most lowte,
With þy Ryȝth kne lette hit be do,
Thy worshyp þou mayst saue so.
Holde of þy cappe & þy hood also
Tylle þou be byden hit on to do;
Alle þe whyle þou spekest with hym,
Fayr & louely holde up þy chynn,
So aftur þe nurtue of þe book
In his face louely þou loke.

From How the Wise Man Taught His Son
(About 1430)

And sonne, sitte not up a euen to longe,
Neiþer vse no rere souperis late;
Þou3 þou be oþe hool an strong,
With such outrage it wole aslake;
And of late walking comþ debate,
And out of tyme to sitte & drink,
Þerfore be waar & keep þi state,
And go to bedde bi tyme, & wynke.

The following articles by widely known students of language discuss the growth of language from somewhat different standpoints. It may prove valuable to compare the materials presented here with the notions you may have formed in earlier studies.

HOW WORDS ARE BORN*

By Janet Rankin Aiken

(The following selection is taken from *English Present and Past*, a valuable contribution to the study of linguistics by Janet Rankin Aiken, Instructor in English at Columbia University. The book as a whole gives an accurate treatment of phonetics, etymology, and inflection. The following paragraphs are a good illustration of the simplicity and clearness of style with which the author treats the subject of the etymology of English words.)

No tongue has benefited so much as English from the vocabularies of other tongues. Words have been adopted from literally hundreds of other dialects, far and near, ancient and modern. Nothing so accurately reflects the restless, inquiring mind of the Anglo-Saxon as his adoption of words from all parts of the globe. If we regard only words from

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the Anglo-Saxon stock as native English, then the imported words in our language outnumber the native ones several times. To find national sources which will account for the bulk of the English vocabulary, at least three languages, English, French, and Latin, must be mentioned.

When a word belonging to some other language is taken over bodily into English without change, or with only such alteration in spelling or pronunciation as will make it conform to English linguistic habit, then it is scarcely true to say that by referring the word to its native tongue we are accounting for the origin of the word. . . .

This being the case, we cannot logically name the adoption of foreign gift words as one of the original sources for the words now found in English, unless the word actually did originate in English and not in the foreign dialect. For example, *telephone* shows two Greek roots or elements, but Greek itself had neither the word nor the thing it represents, and the same is true of *telegraph*. The word *piecemeal* takes its first syllable from French, its second from Anglo-Saxon. Words such as these may justly be said to have originated in English, even though the origin of their elements taken separately lies much further back.

The Need for New Words

Two great departments of modern life, science and trade, furnish the occasion for most of the new words developed today. When a new science, like that of aeronautics, develops, it brings into being with it a whole crop of new terms with which to express its processes or materials. When a new product is about to be marketed, it frequently requires a new name; and the constantly expanding processes of trade likewise are always bringing forth new additions to the English vocabulary.

The ingenuity expressed in some of these trade creations is truly astounding. A word may be spelled backwards like

Klim from *milk*, to name a brand of lactic powder. A whole phrase may be used, as *O-dor-o-no* for a popular deodorant. The first syllables of a company name may be combined, *Nabisco* from *National Biscuit Company*. Even the initial letters frequently make words, *Socony* for *Standard Oil Company of New York*. An odd recent example of such condensation is *Arcoflash*, a trade name for a new type of furnace; expanded, we might translate it *American-Radiator-Company-heats-in-a-flash!*[6]

Few Words from Nothing

While there are numerous words for whose origin we cannot account, there are few indeed to which we can point as having been created "out of nothing."

The reason of course lies in the character of the human intelligence. When a man gets a new idea, he does not get it as a creation from nothing, but as a deduction from, or an advance upon, one or many old ones. Then if he requires a new name for his new idea he will be more than apt to revamp an old one (as for example *the single tax, the theory of relativity*); or he may hitch two or three old name parts together.[7]

And trade follows the same principles of unoriginality. When a new type of motor car is to be launched, it is not ordinarily given a really new name. It may echo the title of an obsolete horse-drawn vehicle in *coupe, cabriolet*, or it may even hark back to a more primitive means of conveyance in *sedan*.

So it is seldom indeed that a new word is cut out of whole

[6] This initialing tendency is very strong in British English, where the Defense of the Realm Act is called Dora, and where recently a little girl organized a society which she called the Pug-Pups, the name meaning *Pick Up Glass, Pick Up Paper*.

[7] Usually, by the way, he will care little for restrictions of linguistic purity or consistency. Thus when *automobile* is formed by the French scientists, later to be shared in the English vocabulary, two elements are combined to state the nature of the thing, *auto* from the Greek *αὐτός, self* and *mobile* from the Latin *mobile, movable*.

linguistic cloth. The word *gas*, invented by Van Helmont, a Dutch chemist, in the seventeenth century, is sometimes given as an example of such a creation from nothing. Certainly *gas* would be admirable as a created word; it is brief, expressive, and suited to the sound systems of almost any of the numerous languages in which it has made itself at home. But *gas* is not without a prototype. It is formed on the Greek χαος and hence is related to our word *chaos*.

A better example of a created word is *kodak*. This word, originally a trade name but now an entry in all the dictionaries, is said actually to be an invented word, which was made up without any model out of the letters of the alphabet, and which therefore owes nothing to any previous word.

Words Named After Noises

It is perhaps a debatable question whether or not a word is "created" when it is the echo, more or less accurate, of a noise. Is *bow-wow* similar in this respect to *kodak?* It seems evident that these imitative or echoic words, of which English possesses a great number, are not made from nothing. They do each have an original or model, even if that original be nothing more than the sucking *squelch* of a foot in the mud, or the hollow *plunk* of a stone dropped into a well.

The adjective *echoic* has been coined to describe these words rather than an older term *imitative*, because the imitation involved in the formation of these words is often so poor that no one would recognize it off-hand. Does a duck really say *quack*, or a rooster *cock-a-doodle-do*? Probably not, since various tongues have widely differing words for these animal noises. Thus the chirp of a little bird, *tweet-tweet* in English, is *tsif-tsif* in Russian. These two words cannot both be accurately imitative.

It is truer to say that in most of these echoic words there is a correspondence between the idea and certain sound groups which are felt (more or less conventionally) to con-

vey that idea. Thus a *bl* combination of sounds tends to distend the cheeks and so to imitate the action of swelling, an idea which is present in several echoic words, *blow, bubble, bluster, blob, blatant, blubber.* In like manner the unvoiced explosive consonants, *p, t,* and *k,* are suited to convey the notion of sharp cries or of sudden or explosive noise or action, *pop, quack, cackle, whoop, ping-pong, tick-tack, ticktock.* The sibilants *s* and *z* are suited to their task of suggesting sharp and prolonged noises, *hiss, sizzle, fizz, whiz, simmer.* Among the vowels, *ee* (as in *meet*) or *i* (as in *sit*), made with a small or contracted mouth cavity, suggest something little, *teeny-weeny, twitter, wibble, jiggle*; while the vowel *u,* in which the mouth cavity is larger, suggests usually a hollow sound, *plunk, thump, boom, hug, coo.* Even though not all the words mentioned as examples are known to have originated in English as echoic words, still their phonetic formation is evidently related to these principles.[8]

Words Named After Their Fathers

It would be an interesting task to compile a list, with biographical notes, of the men, women, and gods whose names have won a permanent place in the English dictionaries. Such names are not always among the great and powerful ones of earth. There are the Cæsars, to be sure, who elevated their name, that of a rather obscure Roman family, until as both the Russian *czar* and the German *kaiser* it means simply *emperor.* But on the other hand, what farmer does not know by his first name the humble Timothy Hansen of England, from the timothy hay of which he was the originator? And just so, every one remembers Dahl, a German who died in 1791, from the dahlia he left behind

[8] While such correspondences between sound and meaning as have just been mentioned undoubtedly possess significance, this general plan of relating sound to sense may easily be carried too far and result in a *reductio ad absurdum* in which almost any word can be shown to typify almost any emotion. Poe's "The Bells" is the standard laboratory material for such studies of "tone coloring."

him. And Louis Pasteur of France is celebrated wherever pasteurized milk is sold.

The internationalism of such name-words is neatly shown in the five terms for units of electrical measurement which derive from Ohm (Germany), Volta (Italy), Ampere (France), Watt (Scotland), and Faraday (England). The classical or biblical times are recalled in *hector, solon, simony, epicurean, platonic, jeremiad*, and many other words.

The words embodying the names of men are numerous, and there are even a few which derive from women. *Pompadour* will occur to every one, and then we have the two uncomplimentary terms *maudlin* (Magdalen) and *tawdry* (St. Audrey). *Sapphics* as a stanzaic form enshrines the name of the Lesbian poetess; and at the other end of the history books we have *bloomers*, a very useful word named after Mrs. Bloomer of New York State. (The early attitude towards bloomers is still reflected in *a bloomer, a social error.*) Certainly Mrs. Bloomer could not have suspected, as she cut her novel garments, that they were to carry her husband's surname to immortality!

Closely allied to the name-words are the place-words, such as *canter, calico, dollar, china, tweed, meander, copper*, each of which carries a story.

Then there are words from fictitious characters. *Knickers* or *knickerbockers* names the pretended author of Washington Irving's history of New York, and *pander* recalls Chaucer's remarkable character-study of Pandarus in "Troilus and Criseyde." There are words from whole races of men, like *vandal* and *slave* (Slav), and words from gods like *martial* and *panic*. *Palace, piazza*, and *cynosure* show yet further variations.

Other Methods of Word-Formation

Strictly speaking, these three sources, the very rare invention of words, and the more common copying of words from

sounds, or from names, exhaust the original sources for new words in English. All the other methods of word-formation make use of already existing meanings in one fashion or another. Words are thus formed out of other words by composition, back-formation, abbreviation, functional shift, and by the mere change of meaning.

Since the human mind always tends to build upon foundations already laid, vastly more new words will be found to utilize old word-meanings than are made up from the more elusive models of sounds or names; and of course, even more new words become English by the simple process of being lifted from foreign tongues. In word-making as in everything else, the conservation of human energy which a sociologist has called "the law of parsimony" is active. If a needed word exists at hand in a neighboring language, English will annex it. If no such word exists, our language will form one from existing English words or word-elements. In exceptional cases a name-word, an echoic word, or even a word-creation, may appear.

Words Formed by Composition—Compounds

We shall consider first words formed by composition, and shall define this group broadly to include any new word formed in English out of other words or word-elements, native or foreign. Defined in this fashion, composition is seen to be by far the most prolific source of new native words.

Often the elements which are merged to form a word are words themselves. Then the result is a compound, which may belong to any of numerous types. A few such types are listed below:

inkpot (pot for ink)
oil-lamp (lamp using oil)
railroad (road of rails)
snow-white (white as snow)

safeguard (guard safely)
fireproof (proof against fire)
bluebottle (fly the color of a blue bottle)
humming-bird (bird which hums)
dead-alive (partly dead, partly alive)
midday (middle of the day)
telltale (one who tells tales)
henpeck (peck like a hen)

All these combinations are new words, no matter how well-known in English their elements may be, and with how little change of meaning they may appear in the compound. That they are new words is proved by the fact that such a combination, if it alters its meaning, does so as a unit; for example, *also* from meaning much the same as *all so* has come to mean *likewise*. Moreover, such compounds after the lapse of time regularly tend to become simplified in spelling, sound, etc., even where their elements separately undergo no such simplification, proving once more that the compound is a distinct word in itself. For example, *loaf* and *ward* have each come down to us in full, while *lord*, formerly a compounding of the two, has simplified radically.

The Composition of Word-Elements

Almost as numerous as the compoundings continually being added to English are the new words formed by the composition of a word and a formative element, or of two elements from English or from foreign stems. A few such recent arrivals, are *microphone, radiogram, racketeer.* It makes no great difference whether the new coinage is accurately descriptive or not; thus a *microphone* is not smaller but larger than a telephone, and speaks over just as great a distance.[9] When a term is needed to describe a new thing, profession, or what not, a new word is not closely scrutinized

[9] It may be that the intent of this word is not *small-telephone* but *voice-made-small.* In this event it is reasonably accurate.

if it fulfils this mission. When a new coinage is awkward in the mouth, it may become simplified, e.g., *airplane* for *aeroplane*; but if it may be said easily, incorrect or hybrid derivation will not exclude it from general adoption.

Abbreviation

Mob, now a good English word, was opposed by Swift and Addison, both of whom called it a vulgar shortening of the correct phrase *mobile* or *mobile vulgus*. Today no one thinks of using the longer form. Likewise *cab* is never referred to *cabriolet* nor *taxi* to *taximeter, bus* and *auto* are also generally used abbreviations, so that we may say *autobus* and *taxicab* where these words, if written in full, would be *automobileomnibus* and *taximetercabriolet*.

Back-Formation

A very interesting if not at all extensive method of forming new words is by back-formation, which is just the reverse of composition. In back-formation a word which looks as if it were composed of two elements, but is not, is taken apart, and one of the ostensible elements is then made into a word. Almost always this process occurs as a result of popular etymology, and often the words which result are not considered to be good English.

Butch (to act as butcher) and *buttle* (to act as butler) are both back-formations. The *er*-endings in *butcher* and *butler* are not formative elements as in *baker, banker*, etc., but are integral parts of these English words. Yet through popular mistaking of this *er*-ending for a formative suffix, the non-dictionary words *butch* and *buttle* have been formed.

An instance of a very early back-formation which has become a common English word is *beg* from *beggar*. The word *beggar*, like *butcher* and *butler*, is not historically a formed word; it was taken from the name of the *Beghards*, a French order of mendicant friars. After the word's pas-

sage into English, it is conjectured that the verb *beg* was formed from *beggar* on the analogy of *bake* and *baker, eat* and *eater,* etc.

CHANGE IN VOCABULARY*

By Edgar H. Sturtevant

(Edgar H. Sturtevant is Professor of Linguistics and Comparative Philology at Yale, and Director of the Linguistic Institute of the Linguistic Society of America. He has been a teacher and writer in the field of language for nearly three decades. The paragraphs given here indicate something of the interest which this field may have for the general reader.)

When ideas are lost to a community, the words which denoted them drop out of use. There are many words in the English dictionary which we never have occasion to use except in speaking of the past. Since threshing machines have been introduced, we rarely speak of "flails"; and since spinning is now done by machinery, the word "distaff" is wanting in most persons' vocabularies. "Stocks," "pillory," and "whipping-post" are rare words. In another generation the schoolboy's "slate" will be as completely forgotten as his "horn book" is now.

Unless synonyms come to be differentiated in meaning, one of them is usually lost. "Writing" and "scripture" once meant the same thing. The latter has been differentiated in meaning from the former, so that it is synonymous with "Bible," and this word has practically driven it out of use. English "yea" and "nay" were once distinguished from "yes" and "no" in that the former answered an affirmative question ("Are you going?"), while the latter answered a negative question ("Are you not going?").

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When this distinction broke down, "yea" and "yes," "nay" and "no" became exact synonyms, and now "yea" and "nay" have become obsolete. In early English the principal parts of "bear" and "break" were "bear, bare, born(e)" and "break, brake, broke(n)." The analogy of such verbs as "slide, slid, slidden," "spin, spun, spun," and "fight, fought, fought," brought the vowel of the participle into the past tense and yielded the forms "bore" and "broke," which have now supplanted their older rivals.

The Polynesian word *tapu* (whence English "taboo"), like Latin *sacer*, must be translated into English sometimes by "sacred" and sometimes by "accursed"; the Polynesians are, as the Romans were, unconscious of the distinction, which to us seems fundamental. The Polynesian "taboo" differs from Latin *sacer* in being connected with magic rather than with religion; and yet Latin *sacer* also was largely a magician's word. A further difference is that Polynesian "taboo" applies to many more acts and objects than Latin *sacer* did. The effect of taboo is that one is forbidden to perform certain acts, to use or to touch certain objects, or to speak certain words. Commoners must not touch or speak to a king or a priest; at certain times one must not eat the flesh of certain animals; one must not enter a burying ground, except to bury the dead; brother and sister must not speak to each other or even remain in each other's presence. If asked why he is afraid to do these things the savage may reply that some harm would befall either himself or someone dear to him; the penalty may be death, disease, failure of crops, etc. In such cases the taboo is a sort of negative magic. But often no penalty can be named for the violation of a taboo; the act is not performed simply because it is regarded as improper.

If the institution of taboo were confined to Polynesia it would not be worth our attention; but it is found in a lesser degree in nearly all savage and semi-civilized races. and

no clear distinction can be drawn between taboo and certain irrational habits of our own. Why, for example, do we not allow a railroad to condemn a right of way through a graveyard? Why do we persist in wearing clothes in the hottest summer weather? Why is it strictly forbidden to eat with one's knife?

By the vast majority of mankind names are identified with the objects for which they are used. In the Hindoo philosophic systems *nāmarūpam* "name and form" signifies "personality, the individual existence of a man"; *nāmarūpam* is even said to originate in the mother's womb. Most systems of magic take it for granted that he who knows the name of a person or object has mystic power over it. Consequently the ancient Egyptians, among others, had two personal names apiece, a "grand" name, which was carefully kept secret, and a "little" name for ordinary use. It is not strange, then, that words as well as things and acts are taboo. In various parts of the world one's own name, or the names of one's relatives, of a husband, of a wife, or of relations by marriage, must be avoided. The natives of Australia and the American Indians, among others, will not speak the name of one who is dead. The names as well as the persons of kings or chiefs are taboo. In many places words which resemble taboo names are themselves taboo. Hence when a new king ascends the throne any word which resembles his name must be given up.

Common nouns too are often taboo. Various dangerous or injurious animals may not be spoken of by their own names, because these are necessarily uncomplimentary; instead they are called "the mighty one," "the silent one," "the old man," or the like. Such circumlocutions are used for the wolf in Sweden, for the bear in Russia, for the rattlesnake by the American Indians, for the lion, the tiger, and the cobra in various tropical countries. . . .

Reasons for the Rise of New Words

New ideas are originated with even greater frequency than old ideas are lost. In the case of new inventions, scientific discoveries, philosophical theories, etc., the new name is usually the work of one man or of a very few. Biologists are always privileged to name new species which they discover. Professor Bloomfield, of Johns Hopkins University, invented the word "haplology," which we had occasion to use above. Other recent words are "appendicitis," "motory" (motory sensations), "subliminal," "helium," "spark-plug." Hundreds of new scientific terms are originated every year. Many of them never come to be used by more than a few specialists, but some, like those just mentioned, gain a more general currency. . . .

Frequently a new word springs up from the people. When the practice of putting criminals to death by means of electricity was introduced, someone invented the word "electrocute" to describe the process. Barbarously formed as the word was, its plausible resemblance to "execute" gained its immediate acceptance with the newspapers and the crowd. The introduction of the "aeroplane" brought with it that word, which is doubtless due to the inventor of the machine, and also such words as "airman," "birdman," which are already obsolete, and "aviator," which bids fair to survive.

Perhaps the most important of all new words are those which stand for new groupings of facts or new subdivisions of a class. A chief difference between the thinking of the savage and that of the civilized man is that the former tends to perceive objects separately, often taking note of comparatively minute differences between them, but more rarely grouping them into classes, while civilized man tends to notice resemblances and to form classes. In other words, civilized thinking is increasingly conceptual. Languages reflect this psychological difference. The Bakaïri Indians of South

America have names for several varieties of parrots, but no word for "parrot"; they distinguish many kinds of palm trees, but have no word for "palm-tree" in general. The primitive Indo-European language had a word for "father" and one for "mother," but there is no evidence that it had a word for "parent"; there was an astonishing number of words to designate relatives of various degrees, but, so far as the evidence goes, no word for "relative" in general. There are savage tongues which use distinct words to indicate how many objects are meant; one word, for example, will denote "one coconut," and quite a different one, "three coconuts." In the personal pronouns of the Indo-European languages we have a trace of this state of affairs. Even in English the first personal pronoun consists of four distinct words, "I," "me," "we," "us."

All languages, especially those of civilized races, are frequently enriched by the introduction of new general terms. The Dutch chemist Van Helmont conceived the idea of a category which should include all such substances, as "air," "oxygen," "hydrogen," etc., and called it "gas." Most names of scientific genera are general terms of recent invention, as are also such comprehensive terms as "vertebrate" and "invertebrate." In this field, however, language lags behind the intellectual life of a people; a new class-name cannot appear until a concept has been formed which it is to represent, but the word need not at once follow the rise of the concept. We often think of "knife," "fork," and "spoon" as the utensils with which we eat, and in Italian the three together are called *posate*; in standard English the concept lacks a name, although housewives sometimes use the phrase "flat silver" in this sense. There is no one word for the articles sold in a bookstore, namely, books, periodicals, and stationery. Neither is there a name for substances that float in water. I once lived at a small boarding-house for students where breakfast was likely to be a hurried meal. When a boarder appeared

in the dining-room, the waiter brought him a dish of cereal and a cup of coffee. Then arose a need for sugar, milk, and spoon, and the only way to get them was to ask another boarder to pass them; it seemed greedy to ask for the three in one breath, and yet if you asked for only one you would ordinarily get only that. We all longed in vain for a general term to include the three until a brilliant Freshman called them the "fixings."

While some savages are content with specific names for objects which interest them—names which designate each minute species and leave the genus undesignated—they have for objects which do not arouse so much interest only vague general terms without any designation for the particulars. The Bakaïri Indians have one word which means "thunder" and "lightning" and another for "rain," "thunderstorm," and "cloud." That is, they can speak of a cloud only by calling it "rain," and the most violent thunderstorm comes under the same term. The difference of this from a group-name, such as English "storm," is apparent. A child speaks in the manner of a savage when he calls all men "papa," all liquids "water," all animals by the first animal name he happens to learn.

Advancing civilization frequently invents specific names for details not hitherto named. English has always had a word for "cloud," although Anglo-Saxon *wolken* was in no way related to the modern term. The names of the different kinds of cloud, however—"cirrus," "cumulus," "nimbus," etc.—are comparatively new. Ancient languages, even Latin and Greek, were poor in color-words and inexact in the use of those that they had. Modern speech is enriched every few years by the introduction of a new color-name of quite exact meaning.

Many new words are due to a desire for novelty. Such are the slang words which spring suddenly into popularity and for a few months seem amusing enough to enliven the dullest

conversation, but which presently send a shudder down the spine of one whose slang is up-to-date. Not long since I heard a professor of my acquaintance remark jauntily, "You're off your base." That phrase was once as fresh and spicy as "have a heart" or "do one's bit" is now; but to use such antiquated slang today is equivalent to labeling yourself a has-been. Who wants to call his partner in the Plattsburg military trot a "lulu" or the music "hot stuff"? Yet that is what one said in the days before the schottische went out of vogue! George Ade's Artie called dollars "cases" or "simoleons." About the year 1910 the word "skiddoo" was a favorite imperative for contemptuous dismissal.

Occasionally a word introduced for the sake of novelty finds a permanent place in the language. "Mob" was originally a jesting abbreviation of the phrase *Mobile vulgus*, and for many years it was regarded as slang. English "gamin" comes from the French, where it was originally slang. There is some indication that the slang word "eats" for "refreshments" will make a place for itself.

When religious feeling, modesty, or prudery leads to the loss of a word, its place is sometimes supplied by an old word or phrase used in a new sense. Many persons say "hades" for "hell," "stomach" for "belly," "perfume" for any kind of a smell. A phrase may be substituted for a tabooed word. Shakespeare's thieves call themselves "St. Nicholas' clerks" or "minions of the moon." A small boy who had been taught not to say "devil" was asked what the day's sermon was about and replied, "About the gentleman that keeps hell."

In other cases the taboo leads to the use of a new word. We say "vomit" instead of "puke," "procurer" for "pimp" or "pander," "perspiration" for "sweat." A few persons say "expectorate" instead of "spit." "Palm-oil" takes the place of "bribe" with practical politicians. "Head-money" is a bribe paid for a vote. "Love-child" is used to avoid the odium of "bastard." Of course there is no end to the inven-

tion of new names for unpleasant things; each of them presently becomes contaminated and has to be abandoned in its turn. To the Greeks the left side was unlucky, and since it was a bad omen to mention ill fortune they avoided the word for "left." . . .

A change of models may lead to the introduction of new words. Some American imitators of the English like to say "shop" instead of "store," "chemist" instead of "druggist," "tram" instead of "street car." Many speakers of English and German like to employ French words, particularly for anything that has to do with eating or getting married. Hence we have "chef" and "fiancée," "table d'hôte" and "trousseau," "café noir," and "divorcée."

Sources of New Words—Analogical Creation

By far the most important means of enriching the vocabulary is analogical creation, a subject to which we have alluded, but which demands further treatment here. In standard English we have the words "enthusiasm," "enthusiast," and "enthusiastic," but since there is no corresponding verb we are compelled to use the cumbrous phrases, "to become enthusiastic" and "to make enthusiastic." Aside from their excessive length these locutions are unsatisfactory because they differ from the other members of the group more widely than is justified by a difference in function. To meet this want the verb "enthuse" has been formed. It has not yet won its way into good usage, but it fills a real need and will probably become a permanent part of the language.

As we observed before, the tendency toward analogical creation can always be represented in the form of a problem in proportion. The German personal pronouns have separate forms for accusative and dative singular, *mich, mir; dich, dir*; but the reflexive has only one form for the two cases. Some dialects have formed a new dative, as a result

of the tendency which we may formulate, *dich:dir = sich*:x (*sir*). Ordinarily the formula is not so simple as this, unless we arbitrarily abbreviate it. Vulgar English has formed the verbs "elocute" and "evolute" after the nouns "elocution" and "evolution." The pairs of words which led to the new formations were extremely numerous; a partial statement of the formula is "construct": "construction" = "subtract": "subtraction" = "promote": "promotion" = "regulate": "regulation" = "emulate": "emulation" = "constitute": "constitution" = "execute": "execution" = x: "elocution" = x: "evolution." In such a case it is usual to select one or two pairs to represent the entire group and to state the problem and its solution together: "execute": "execution" = "evolute": "evolution."

Composition

A phrase which has been fused into a single word is called a compound word. The change from phrase to word is gradual, and many expressions may be considered either as phrases or as compound words. Is "apple-pie" one word or two? Is "nevertheless" one word or three? If it is one word, what shall we say of the equivalent expression, "for all that"? There is the same question about the Latin *quemadmodum*, and *senatusconsultum*; about the German *möglicherweise* and *wenngleich*. In general we may say that we are dealing with a compound word and no longer with a phrase when the whole is in any way isolated so as to be felt as a unit. Latin *denuo* from *dénovo* is isolated by the change of *ov* to *u* in the unaccented syllable. English "anew" was originally "of new," for we habitually say "a" for "of" before a consonant ("a matter a fact," "a pound a tea"). "Anew," however, is no longer felt as a phrase, because "new" without the article is no longer used as a substantive. "Midnight" and "midday" are felt as compounds, because their first ele-

ment is a word no longer used in ordinary speech. "Railroad" is isolated by the fact that it does not apply to all roads made of rails (not, for example, to roads made of wooden rails lying crosswise), and it is still further isolated by the information it conveys, which cannot be inferred from the syntactic combination of its elements; for "railroad" means, in part, "a road constructed of steel rails laid upon wooden crossties for the rapid passage of heavy cars propelled by steam or electricity." Other compounds which are isolated by the large amount of meaning packed into them are English "typewriter," "fireworks," German *Fernsprecher* "telephone," Latin *verisimilis*, which is not merely "like the truth," but also "probably true, probable." . . .

Not all compounds, however, can be explained as stereotyped phrases. When compounds of a given type have become familiar in a language, new compounds of similar form and meaning are made by analogical creation. At the time when illuminating gas was introduced English had long possessed the compounds "sunlight," "daylight," "firelight," "candlelight," "lamplight." Since that day the group has been extended by the analogical compound "gaslight." . . .

Original Creation

So far we have been discussing the formation of new words from speech material already in existence. A really new creation of linguistic material is so rare that it should be assumed only on the strongest evidence; nevertheless it does occur.

Some of the most familiar cases of original creation result from what the psychologists call expression movements. "Every mental process has some way of expressing itself through the body; or, in other words, there is always some bodily sign which tells us, if we are good observers, that a

certain mental process is in our neighbor's consciousness." These bodily signs of mental processes are most pronounced in the case of emotions. Darwin describes the marks of fear as follows:

"That the skin is much affected under the sense of great fear, we see in the marvelous and inexplicable manner in which perspiration immediately exudes from it. This exudation is all the more remarkable as the surface is then cold. . . . The salivary glands act imperfectly; the mouth becomes dry, and is often opened and shut."

Darwin refers to the effect which fear has upon the muscles of the mouth and throat; other emotions also affect the organs of speech, and the result is frequently a sound; hence the cries of young children and of the deaf. A sound which in the first instance was due to an expression movement may be repeated or may be imitated by others to suggest the circumstances under which the sound was first made. In this way we get some of our conventional interjections. "Oo" is often heard as an expression for pleasant sensation, but seems not to have got into the dictionaries. "Oh" as an interjection for surprise and "ow" and "ouch" for sudden pain have long had lexical treatment; so has the grunt of disgust ("ugh") and the grunt of disdain ("humph"). Such interjections as these are even more distinct from the general body of speech than are proper names; but still ordinary words may be made from them. . . .

The various cries which we use to attract attention, such as "boo" and "hello" and "hey," are perhaps not due to expression movements, but they seem to be original creations of a similar nature. "Hem" was in the first instance the sound made by clearing the throat in preparation for speaking, and hence it came to have value for attracting attention. The word may also be used as a verb, "He hemmed and hawed." The interjections *sh, ss*, and *st* have given rise to

the words "hush," "hiss," and "hist," the first two of which have derivatives, "hushed," "husher," "hisses," "hissing," etc.

As one watches an exciting game or any other effort which arouses sympathy, one has an impulse to imitate the movements observed. I have seen an umpire at basket-ball attract the attention of an entire audience by the ludicrous way in which he played the game on the sidelines. Singers say that after hearing very high notes they find that they have strained their vocal chords and become hoarse. It is not incredible, then, that the sight of a swaying object should set the lips to swinging and lead to the utterance of a sound like German *bammeln* "sway," which some suppose to have originated in this way.

Somewhat similar to this, but involving more or less conscious effort, is the imitation of a sound in nature. There are very many words which seem to mimic the sounds they signify; "thunder," "grumble," "ring," and all such words are sometimes called onomatopoetic. In many cases, however, this imitative character did not originally belong to them. When our word "thunder" is traced back to the Anglo-Saxon, it loses considerable part of its sonorousness, and the corresponding verb *þunian* roars even more gently. The related verbs, Latin *tonet* and Sanskrit *tanvati*, do not suggest thunder at all. . . . It is then by no means certain that the original meaning was "thunder," and it is exceedingly improbable that the word was originally an imitation of thunder. Some words, however, are clearly imitative. A number of interjections are mere echoes of sounds, for example, "kerplunk," "biff," "bing," German *bums*.

The names of birds are very often imitations of their cries. In English we have "chewink," "bobolink," "chickadee," "chough," "curlew," "dickcissel," "pewee." The names "bobwhite" and "whippoorwill" owe their present form to contamination with older linguistic material.

THE BIBLE IN ENGLISH LITERATURE*

By Lafcadio Hearn

(Lafcadio Hearn, 1850-1904, of Irish-Greek parentage, was for some years a newspaper man and writer of fiction in the United States. He later went to Japan, was naturalized as a Japanese citizen, and became Professor of English Literature at the Imperial University at Tokyo. He did much to acquaint the western world with the literature and philosophy of the East.)

But every great scripture, whether Hebrew, Indian, Persian, or Chinese, apart from its religious value will be found to have some rare and special beauty of its own; and in this respect the original Bible stands very high as a monument of sublime poetry and of artistic prose. If it is not the greatest of religious books as a literary creation, it is at all events one of the greatest; and the proof is to be found in the inspiration which millions and hundreds of millions, dead and living, have obtained from its utterances. The Semitic races have always possessed in a very high degree the genius of poetry, especially poetry in which imagination plays a great part; and the Bible is the monument of Semitic genius in this regard. Something in the serious, stern, and reverential spirit of the genius referred to made a particular appeal to western races having certain characteristics of the same kind. Themselves uncultivated in the time that the Bible was first made known to them, they found in it almost everything that they thought and felt, expressed in a much better way than they could have expressed it. Accordingly the northern races of Europe found their inspiration in the Bible; and the enthusiasm for it has not yet quite faded away.

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But the value of the original, be it observed, did not make the value of the English Bible. Certainly it was an inspiring force; but it was nothing more. The English Bible is perhaps a much greater piece of fine literature, altogether considered, than the Hebrew Bible. It was so for a particular reason which it is very necessary for the student to understand. The English Bible is a product of literary evolution.

In studying English criticisms upon different authors, I think that you must have sometimes felt impatient with the critics who told you, for example, that Tennyson was partly inspired by Wordsworth and partly by Keats and partly by Coleridge; and that Coleridge was partly inspired by Blake and Blake by the Elizabethans, and so on. You may have been tempted to say, as I used very often myself to say, "What does it matter where the man got his ideas from? I care only for the beauty that is in his work, not for a history of his literary education." But to-day the value of the study of such relations appears in quite a new light. Evolutional philosophy, applied to the study of literature as to everything else, has shown us conclusively that man is not a god who can make something out of nothing, and that every great work of genius must depend even less upon the man of genius himself than upon the labours of those who lived before him. Every great author must draw his thoughts and his knowledge in part from other great authors, and these again from previous authors, and so on back, till we come to that far time in which there was no written literature, but only verses learned by heart and memorised by all the people of some one tribe or place, and taught by them to their children and to their grandchildren. It is only in Greek mythology that the divinity of Wisdom leaps out of a god's head, in full armour. In the world of reality the more beautiful a work of art, the longer, we may be sure, was the time required to make it, and the greater the number of different minds which assisted in its development.

So with the English Bible. No one man could have made the translation of 1611. No one generation of men could have done it. It was not the labour of a single century. It represented the work of hundreds of translators working through hundreds of years, each succeeding generation improving a little upon the work of the previous generation, until in the seventeenth century the best had been done of which the English brain and the English language was capable. In no other way can the surprising beauties of style and expression be explained. No subsequent effort could improve the Bible of King James. Every attempt made since the seventeenth century has only resulted in spoiling and deforming the strength and the beauty of the authorised text.

Now you will understand why, from the purely literary point of view, the English Bible is of the utmost importance for study. Suppose we glance for a moment at the principal events in the history of this evolution.

The first translation of the Bible into a western tongue was that made by Jerome (commonly called Saint Jerome) in the fourth century; he translated directly from the Hebrew and other Arabic languages into Latin, then the language of the Empire. This translation into Latin was called the Vulgate,—from *vulgare*, "to make generally known." The Vulgate is still used in the Roman church. The first English translations which have been preserved to us were made from the Vulgate, not from the original tongues.

First of all, John Wycliffe's Bible may be called the foundation of the seventeenth century Bible. Wycliffe's translation, in which he was helped by many others, was published between 1380 and 1388. So we may say that the foundation of the English Bible dates from the fourteenth century, one thousand years after Jerome's Latin translation. But Wycliffe's version, excellent as it was, could not serve very long: the English language was changing too

quickly. Accordingly, in the time of Henry VIII, Tyndale and Coverdale, with many others, made a new translation, this time not from the Vulgate, but from the Greek text of the great scholar Erasmus. This was the most important literary event of the time, for "it coloured the entire complexion of subsequent English prose,"—to use the words of Professor Gosse. This means that all prose in English written since Henry VIII has been influenced, directly or indirectly, by the prose of Tyndale's Bible, which was completed about 1535. Almost at the same time a number of English divines, under the superintendence of Archbishop Cranmer, gave to the English language a literary treasure scarcely inferior to the Bible itself, and containing wonderful translations from the Scriptures,—the "Book of Common Prayer." No English surpasses the English of this book, still used by the church; and many translators have since found new inspiration from it.

A revision of this famous Bible was made in 1565, entitled "The Bishops' Bible." The cause of the revision was largely doctrinal, and we need not trouble ourselves about this translation farther than to remark that Protestantism was re-shaping the Scriptures to suit the new state religion. Perhaps this edition may have had something to do with the determination of the Roman Catholics to make an English Bible of their own. The Jesuits began the work in 1582 at Rheims, and by 1610 the Roman Catholic version known as the Douay (or Douai) version—because of its having been made chiefly at the Catholic College of Douai in France—was completed. This version has many merits; next to the wonderful King James version, it is certainly the most poetical; and it has the further advantage of including a number of books which Protestantism has thrown out of the authorised version, but which have been used in the Roman church since its foundation. But I am speaking of the book only as a literary English production. It was not made with the help

of original sources; its merits are simply those of a melodious translation from the Latin Vulgate.

At last, in 1611, was made, under the auspices of King James, the famous King James version; and this is the great literary monument of the English language. It was the work of many learned men; but the chief worker and supervisor was the Bishop of Winchester, Lancelot Andrews, perhaps the most eloquent English preacher that ever lived. He was a natural-born orator, with an exquisite ear for the cadences of language. To this natural faculty of the Bishop's can be attributed much of the musical charm of the English in which the Bible was written. Still, it must not be supposed that he himself did all the work, or even more than a small proportion of it. What he did was to tone it; he overlooked and corrected all the text submitted to him, and suffered only the best forms to survive. Yet what magnificent material he had to choose from! All the translations of the Bible that had been made before his time were carefully studied with a view to the conservation of the best phrases, both for sound and for form. We must consider the result not merely as a study of literature in itself, but also as a study of eloquence; for every attention was given to those effects to be expected from an oratorical recitation of the text in public.

This marks the end of the literary evolution of the Bible. Everything that has since been done has only been in the direction of retrogression, of injury to the text. We have now a great many later versions, much more scholarly, so far as correct scholarship is concerned, than the King James version, but none having any claim to literary importance. Unfortunately, exact scholars are very seldom men of literary ability; the two faculties are rarely united. The Bible of 1870, known as the Oxford Bible, and now used in the Anglican state-church, evoked a great protest from the true men of letters, the poets and critics who had found their inspirations in the useful study of the old version. The new

version was the work of fourteen years; it was made by the united labour of the greatest scholars in the English-speaking world; and it is far the most exact translation that we have. Nevertheless the literary quality has been injured to such an extent that no one will ever turn to the new revision for poetical study. Even among the churches there was a decided condemnation of this scholarly treatment of the old text; and many of the churches refused to use the book. In this case, conservatism is doing the literary world a service, keeping the old King James version in circulation, and insisting especially upon its use in Sunday schools.

CHAPTER 5

LANGUAGE IN USE

How forcible are right words!
—The Book of Job

When Ichabod Crane taught school, the only question about language which could be raised was one of right or wrong, and the arbiter was always the rule in the book. When the blind lead the blind, both must follow the pup. For many years language instruction in the schools was in the hands of the pedagogical descendents of Ichabod. They were concerned entirely with what is "correct." That language was correct which was approved by some authority—the writer of the textbook used in class. Later, a more intelligent group of teachers began to ask for the basis upon which the writers of grammars and rhetorics approved or disapproved a given word or phrase. Then authority was pushed back to "good use"—the usage of "the best speakers and writers of the language." Still more recently, teachers of the vernacular have been influenced by the "scientific spirit" and have had a tendency to approve any locution which they find on investigation to be used by the great majority of people. This last attitude is much like that of the man who might, upon "scientific investigation," find that more blue overalls are worn than dress suits, and who should then decide that blue overalls are fitting costume to wear to the Inaugural Ball. It would seem that there must be some criteria of good speech and writing other than the approval either of the select few or of the unselect many.

During the past few years, many English teachers have fallen under the spell of the writer of advertisements, and

the only question they ask about any speech, oral or written, is whether it is effective. The standard of effectiveness is, perhaps, a better standard than that of authority. Moreover, the standard of effectiveness meets the approval of high-school and college students. It sounds reasonable, and it seems to relieve them of any difficult study of their speech habits, because they know that they have at command the current campus slang which is, indeed, a facile and effective instrument for conveying their simple thoughts to their fellows!

But making effectiveness the sole criterion of approved speech is like making effectiveness in accumulating wealth the sole criterion of business integrity. It places the award of approval upon the least scrupulous. Effectiveness we need to cultivate, but perhaps we should have other standards of value to inoculate us against the too effective style of the "ad-writer," and of the demagog—political, educational, religious, social, or what not. For speech is not merely a means of influencing others. Its most important function is, perhaps, its power to clarify our own thoughts. And this function should be taken into account when we attempt to determine standards to assist us in judging language values.

These shifting points of view on the part of English teachers have had some very desirable results. For one thing, the bugaboo of "correct" speech has been laid for all the more intelligent. Emphasis has been shifted from rules and authority to the consideration of speech as a type of human behavior, and to its nature and possibilities. It has come to be recognized that no manner of speech can be said to be good aside from consideration of the occasion which calls it into being. What is "good English" for a formal address might be very poor English for ordinary conversation. George Philip Krapp, in *The Knowledge of English* (Ch. VI), has presented the best of recent thinking on this matter of the

various levels of speech. But ability to use language appropriate to the different levels is not born with us. It is a matter of knowledge and of taste. The best training we can give ourselves is to read widely and to watch closely our own language and that of those around us.

The following articles discuss some of the principles which govern language in use. The extracts from Mulcaster show the somewhat formless sentence structure which was inevitable before our more rigid conventions were established. But even Richard Mulcaster recognized convention, usage (consent), as the guiding principle in all effective writing or speaking.

THE RIGHT WRITING OF OUR ENGLISH TUNG*

By Richard Mulcaster

(In 1582 there was printed in London "The first part of the elementarie vvhich entreateth chefelie of the right writing of our english tung, set furth by richard mvlcaster." In this *Elementarie*, Richard Mulcaster undertook to show that the "English tung" was capable of meeting all the demands which might be made upon any language. He attempted to formulate the best usage of his time for the benefit of those who would write and speak the language effectively. His attitude was infinitely more scientific than that of much of the teaching of English which still persists in many of our schools. He says: "I haue soũded the thing by the depth of our tung, and planted my rules vpon our ordinarie custom, the more my frind, bycause it is followed, nowhere my fo, bycause nowhere forced. Whereby I do perceiue, why we ought to write thus, as the common current is, without the alteration of either custom, or charact, tho with som correction of certain wâts, and generall direction for the hole pen.")

As for *consent* this I haue to saie, that it did both beget letters and gaue them their forces, at the verie first, to ex-

* These extracts are taken from the edition of the *Elementarie*, prepared by E. T. Campagnac and printed at The Clarendon Press, 1925.

presse the sound of the articulate voice, and that from time to time it hath so altered, and vsed them vpon nedefull cause, by lawfull autoritie of it self, confirming it self, as theie haue followed that course, which *consent* hath commanded, and good reason why? For mens nede being the onelie cause, why theie fly to new deuises, whereby to supply that nede: if theie thēselues do confesse their own nede to be supplyed by such a mean, as theie haue found out, will you seke further prouf thereof, then their own confession, which both found the want, and fele the help? And if vpon som longer, and therefor better trauell, theie do find that the thing, which theie liked on at the first excedinglie well, while the misliking of their want persuaded the well liking of anie thing at all, which serued for supply, must afterward be qualifyed much otherwise, then it was at the first, to be so made proper to all performances, which their nede requireth, will ye not beleue them in that, which theie both find and fele? whether you do or no, the truth will, and pronounceth peremptorilie that *custom* doth, and must rule in all such cases, where manie ar to practis a thing, of their own procurement, but most of all there, where theie haue practised allredie, and ar most willing to continew in that, the which theie haue practised, as in this our writing. Wherefor it shall please my good cuntrimen to giue their consent, that this is their right in writing, without further parlementing, it will proue so in dede. And why it should be so I will alledge verie fair, and yet nothing else, but that, which euen theie themselues vse in their dailie writing: wherein as theie maie be judges of the matter vpon familiaritie with it: so will I frame the mean to ascertain the matter, according vnto the president of all the best tungs. . . .

All the words which we do vse in our tung be either naturall English, and most of one syllab, or borowed of the foren, and most of manie syllabs. Whereby our tung semeth

to haue two heds, the one homeborn, the other a stranger whereof either hath a great train following it. The causes of either be these. While the inhabitants of our cuntrie neither encũbred their braines with much studie, neither bissied their heds with great trafik, neither pleased their fantsies with far trauell, theie vsed no other terms, thẽ such as their own nede enforced them vnto, which being allwaie fed with home occasions desired no help of forẽ tungs, to vtter those things with their words which were deuised without their wits. But after that the desire of learning enflamed studie, the longing for gain brought in great traffik, the delight to range, did cause men trauell, new occasions brought furth new words, as either more cunning made waie to more terms, or as strange deuises did seke strange deliueries. For when the minde is fraught with matter to deliuer, it is still in pain vntill it haue deliuered, and therefor to haue the deliuerie such, as maie discharge the thing well, and content all parties, both by whom and to whom the matter is deliuered, it seketh both home helps, where theie be sufficient, and significant, and where the own home yeildeth nothing at all, or not pithie enough, it craueth help of that tung, from whence it receiued the matter of deliuerie. Hence commeth it that we haue our tung commonlie both stored and enlarged with our neighbours speches, and the old learned tungs. A thing not proper to vs alone, but commõ to all those, which vse anie speche in matters more then ordinarie, naie in matters aboue the brutish. The necessitie of these foren words must nedes be verie great bycause the number of them is so verie manie, as it doth appear most plainlie by the generall table, where hole ranks of *enfranchised* terms do match togither in one front. To whom we are much beholden, for that theie vouchsafe to becom English to serue our nede, as their peple ar to thank our tung, for

returning the like help, in cases of like nede, tho their occasions to vse ours be nothing so often, as ours to vse theirs.

THE INDIAN AND HIS LANGUAGE*

By Chief Buffalo Child Long Lance

(Chief Buffalo Child Long Lance was a captain in the Canadian army during the World War. Since that time he has lectured widely and contributed to a number of magazines.)

During the long winters in the far northern zones, when the days were just a few short hours, our mothers spent a good deal of their time each day teaching and training us youngsters into the ways of the Indian. Like the white boy, we had to take our schooling during the winter. Our mothers spent about two hours every day teaching us how to speak our tribal language correctly. This is a very important point with the Indian—his language—as his social status in later years depends on his ability to handle his grammar properly. Any Indian allowed to grow up without being able to speak his language with absolute correctness is relegated to the rank of an outcast in the tribe; and he is never allowed to speak in public, lest his linguistic defects should be passed on to others—and especially the children—and thus defile the tribal tongue. Therefore, since we had no books nor written language, our mothers had to spend many hours drilling into us the ancient grammar of our tribal speech—which is very elaborate, having nine conjugations, four genders and eighty forms.

* Reprinted by permission from *Long Lance*, by Chief Buffalo Child Long Lance, published by The Cosmopolitan Book Company, 1928.

THE SPOKEN WORD*

By Charles Henry Woolbert

(*The Fundamentals of Speech,* from which the present extract is taken, has been a widely used text. Its author, Charles Henry Woolbert, was teacher of English and public speaking in the University of Illinois, and later in the University of Iowa. This extract emphasizes the fact, which students sometimes overlook, that good oral speech habits are even more important than good writing habits.)

The spoken word is still supreme. Writers abound and wield great influence, and the educated world, indulging in much reading and some writing, gives to reading and writing high rank in the scale of educational attainment. Yet both of these are learned through the spoken word: always speech must precede. When men seek light in a crisis, when the issues of life are keen, they resort to speech. Writing may well be a distinct mark of schooling, and the ability to read wisely a valuable test of the educated man; but men speak twenty times to once that they write. Many who speak much and often do not write at all, while they read but little. Most of what is read, besides, is either accepted inertly or, if questioned for authenticity, affords no easy measures for resolving doubt. When man listens to speaking, however, he has a definite guide for his reaction: he can look the speaker in the eye, study his face, watch his actions and bearing, analyze his voice, penetrate into the man himself, and then know whether or not he finds him worthy of credence.

This is the reason why, when men really care, when an issue is deeply at stake, when the crisis impends, they resort not so much to the writer as to the speaker. The page is impersonal, but the speaker is a living personality. Words

* Reprinted by permission from *The Fundamentals of Speech,* by Charles Henry Woolbert, published by Harper and Brothers. 1920.

without the sound of the voice and the sight of the man who utters them can easily be words and nothing more. A juggler can manipulate verbiage on paper so cleverly that the man who reads, lacking the sight of the man who writes or the perception of his emotional temper at the time of writing, will lose completely the intimate evidence that would tell him whether he dare or dare not trust such a one. A speech, a talk, a conversation, is always and must be much more than words; the sight alone of the man speaking tells volumes. Even more is revealed by the quality and the energy of his voice. The very man himself is laid bare by speech; not his words alone.

So whenever men are greatly in earnest, whenever they desire the truth and the truth fairly, they gather in groups to talk, listen and observe. By no possible intensifying of writing and reading can man ever satisfy or supplant his desire to foregather with his kind, look his fellow in the eye, speak or listen, personality to personality, heart to heart, soul to soul. The spoken word is as much more vital and valuable than the written as a telephone conversation is more satisfactory than a telegram, or a conversation than a letter—and for the very same reasons.

But not everybody who speaks speaks well. It is even safe to say that the great majority of speakers—of conversers, talkers, and public speakers—speak poorly. The delightful conversationalist, the inspiring and instructive talker, the effective public speaker are truly rare. When we find one we mark him and take him to our hearts. And so it happens that for the very reason that speech cannot by any possibility be a matter of indifference to our commonplace lives or to our crucial moments, we have come into the way of decrying all this poor speaking by an attendant exaltation of writing. Because speech is so vital a thing, when it fails, the loss is great enough to cause distress. Consequently in the presence of the mumbler, the droner, or the mouther

of words, men are deeply disappointed and greatly pained. Bankruptcy in speech is a solemn affliction because speech is the crowning achievement of human mind and the very cementing principle of civilization.

MAKING IDEAS STICK*

By H. A. Overstreet

(In 1911, Harry A. Overstreet went from the University of California to become Head of the Department of Psychology in the College of the City of New York. He is the author of numerous monographs and technical papers on psychological subjects. Students who are preparing themselves for any public business or profession will find many suggestions of value in his volume, *Influencing Human Behavior.*)

Obviously, if we are really to influence persons, it is not enough simply to capture their attention. We must hold it. If what we have to say "goes in one ear and comes out the other" nothing very profound can be expected to happen. If, on the contrary, what we say "sticks in the mind," we may be sure that our words have a power to affect behavior.

Words are of two kinds, those of common currency, and those of special mintage. The ordinary mind uses the former almost entirely—horse, chair, house, train, river, paper. That is why the ordinary mind, in the effort to express itself, is usually dull. The out-of-the-ordinary mind, on the other hand, has a way of giving a new twist to the old words, or of arrestingly inventing new words.

"A new twist to old words" is a simple but effective formula for getting a purchase on the memory. We are not likely to forget the term, "passive resistance." Both "passive" and "resistance" are words of common currency.

* Reprinted by permission from *Influencing Human Behavior*, by Harry A. Overstreet, published by W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1925.

The combination of them, however, is of special mintage. The power of that newly constructed word-combination lies in the fact that it brings to swift, crystal-clear expression a number of ideas hitherto vaguely felt or surmised and only expressed with cumbersome circumlocution. Now that this combination of ideas is named, it becomes, for multitudes of people, an actual plan of action. . . .

Note the attention-holding power of the following—also the delightful gaiety of some of them: jazz, flapper, robots, bootlegger, lounge-lizard, pussy-foot, pee-wee politician, fascist, Rotarian. . . .

Phrases that stick are powerful as attention-holders and as influencers of behavior. The kinds that are really effective, of course, are those that delight us; those that awaken a strong emotional response; those that express for us swiftly, powerfully what we feel and think. They may convey intensity of feeling, as "My country right or wrong"; or "No entangling alliances"; or "Deutschland über alles"; or "God save the King"; or "Equal rights to all and special privileges to none." Or they may be a call to action: "Workers of the world unite!"

Phrases and sentences like these are powerful because they are so brilliantly economical of our thought-power. They do not enter our minds by long, circuitous routes. No sooner are they spoken than they are part of us. And once part of us, they refuse to be forgotten. . . .

If the reader will explore his own mind and recall what has really been of profound and continuing influence in his life, he will no doubt find that it is, in a large measure, the words and phrases that have sunk so deeply into his consciousness that they have become part of himself. Hence, if we would be powerful in influencing our day and generation, we must not scorn verbal facility as something too external to be bothered about. We may indeed be great

enough to be mentally powerful and verbally clumsy. But there is no virtue in verbal clumsiness. Nor do we abdicate our profundity, if we seek, with the spirit of the artist, to sharpen and intensify our verbal expressions.

This brings us to our second point: attention paid to the sharpening of our verbal expressions is attention paid to the sharpening of our minds. Only as our minds are sharpened are we able to fashion the "phrases that stick." Let us, for a moment, discuss that rather frequent phenomenon, the mind that constantly uses commonplace expressions or *clichés*. Of course we all use *clichés*. We use them by the dozens and the scores. We cannot help doing so. The very phrase that we used in the former sentence is a *cliché*. We might, in an attempt to be brilliantly different, have said: "We use them by the fives, the sevens, the thirteens and the twenty-ones." That would at least have been arresting. But what would have been the good? We should only have succeeded in arousing arithmetical annoyances and in diverting attention from what we were going on to say. One can, in short, be altogether too brilliant. In one's attempt to the different, one can (to use another *cliché*) lean over backward so far that one risks being taken for a vaudeville tumbler.

And yet there comes a time in the speech of men when we sometimes pray that we may be delivered. Listening to a number of addresses a few days ago, we collected the following literary—heavens we were just going to write "gems"! Another radiant *cliché*! Let us call them "literary prunes"! "I feel it a great honor to be present on this occasion"; "extend a most hearty and cordial welcome"; "in paying my humble tribute"; "let us express the hope"; "it is but fair to say"; "of whom we are proud"!

Cannot the reader catch the orotund solemnity of those phrases that surely hark back to Hammurabi and the Pyr-

amids! Particularly of that grand old wheel-horse of a phrase: "of whom we are proud"!

But these were not all by any means; for in due order came: "it is a rare privilege"; "in the chosen field of his endeavors"; "we are honored by the presence"; "who drank at the fountain of learning"; "on this occasion we are gathered to pay tribute."

Then the inevitable stock-in-trade of reminiscence! "That summon up the memories of one's youth"; "in my mind's eye this splendid auditorium fades into perspective"; "the dear old chapel"; "those who have passed into the Great Beyond"; "my heart is filled with gratitude"; "that respect for age and tradition"; "lessons of the past"; "in this my native city"; "this beloved institution of ours."

And finally, in one grand rapture of ecstatic eloquence: "that stimulus to high ideals of character and citizenship which . . . !"

There is a point, in short, at which the use of *clichés* becomes a symptom. We may all use a goodly number of them and do no harm; but one more, another and still another; and the proverbial camel's hump breaks beneath the final straw! A physician will often make a profound diagnosis from what is apparently a most trifling aberration. Take the knee jerk, for example. Most of us have knee jerks, but are quite unaware of it. But let the physician discover in us an absence of this useful little kick; and he pulls a grave face. There is, then, something deeply the matter with us. So, in like manner, the absence of those slight qualities of difference in one's phrases, of nuance, suggestiveness, should cause the expert reader of minds to regard us a little closely; to inquire solicitously about our mental processes; to doubt whether the vitality of our intellectual life was quite up to par.

A *cliché*, of course, is, by definition, a "stereotype plate." Printers, in America, have a less elegant name: "boiler

plate." "Boiler plate stuff" is a short trade name which speaks volumes. There is in it a fine, airy contempt for the kind of literary "junk" that is bought by the ton—particularly by the small country newspapers. No brains required of the editor. Just so much per pound, delivered; and the trick is turned!

Some day we shall cease attempting to read character by the face. Our faces are born with us; and there is not much that we can do about it. But our phrases! "Well what do you know about that!" There are at least seventy million back fences over which that phrase is being tossed with open-eyed wonder. "Did you ever!" "You don't say so!" "Well I never!" "And so I sez to him, sez I; and he sez to me!"

"Out of their mouths shall my people be judged." That is good psychological doctrine; for our verbal habits are in large measure the reflex of our thinking habits. The inveterate cliché-ist is apt to be the inveterate platitudinarian. He is animated boiler plate. He is—particularly if he is earnest and eloquent—resounding literary junk.

How does one get that way? Political stump speakers are apt to be the star performers with *clichés*. Is it because they have grown so used to appealing to the least common denominator of the crowd intelligence that their own intelligence has ceased to function? We know that a subtle thought, an unusual proposal, a new idea has a poor chance to "get across" in a large political meeting. For the most part, only platitudes win applause. Only the accustomed clap-trap appeals. Does a political speaker deliberately suppress his subtler intelligence; keep it assiduously hidden; does his intelligence grow flabby from disuse; or is he perhaps a successful political speaker precisely because he has no truly searching intelligence?

There is, of course, a value in accustomed phrases. They

represent verbal habits which, in the aggregate, save a prodigious amount of one's energy. It would be as foolish to ask a person to frame a novel phrase for each meaning expressed as to bid him tie his necktie in a new way every morning. Habits are formed for the sake of releasing other worthwhile energies. And so it is with these mental habits called commonplace phrases. One need therefore not be ashamed of using a good many commonplace phrases provided that in some region of one's speech, one's phrases wear that mark of precision and of distinction which announces a living, functioning mind behind the words.

The *cliché* mind is the mind which never shows these marks of distinction, which on all occasions and in every way, uses the words and the phrases that everybody is using. One would suppose that this kind of mind rarely exists. As a matter of fact it exists in droves. Most persons, in short, show in their speech precisely that absence of subtle distinction and uniqueness of phrasing which is the sign of the commonplace, and nondiscriminating mind.

But if this is so, what is to be done about it? If the mind is commonplace, the speech will be commonplace, will it not? and there's an end of it! Are we contending here that by attempting to polish up one's phrasing, one can change one's commonplace mind into a mind more distinguished?

Precisely. And for this reason. The mind is no mystical entity, existing in aloof, metaphysical changelessness as either commonplace or distinguished. *The mind is what it does.* Or better still, *the mind becomes what it does.* Give a mind something new to feed upon; give it something new to do; and it becomes a different mind. Let us suppose, for example, that a person, convicted of the rather inordinate use of *cliché* phrases, set about to overhaul his speech. Suppose he deliberately noted down all the quite commonplace phrases he used; and then, when no one was attending, tried

out all the possible modifications and improvements of which he could think.

That would be an exercise in sharpening his own mind! In short, in the very effort to halt a *cliché* on its banal way; in the very effort to make it say more precisely, or more colorfully, or more subtly what he wished to say or what he might have wished to say had he known better, he would be emerging from the *cliché* class.

It is not sufficiently understood, perhaps, that the power of a mind is directly conditioned by its verbal equipment. A person with a very small vocabulary inevitably has a small range of thought. A person with a larger range of vocabulary has a larger range of thought. The reason for this is fairly clear. Suppose a person has never heard of the word "ethnology." He consequently does not possess the clearly defined idea-system suggested by that word. Suppose now he learns the meaning of the word, so that he can use it freely. A new idea-system has been added to his stock. Thus, as our effective vocabulary increases, our thought-systems increase.

Even by the simple process of increasing our verbal tools, therefore, it is within our power to increase our thought-systems. Now the same result occurs when we attempt to substitute for phrases that are vague, colorless, and commonplace, phrases that express our meanings with greater vividness, subtlety and precision.

To clarify a phrase, therefore, is to do more than engage in a mere bit of literary brightening. It is to clarify one's mind. Thus by becoming thoughtful about our commonplace phrases we become thoughtful about our commonplace ideas. We begin to probe them; to modify them; and sometimes to discard them altogether. And so we begin to shape ideas of our own that are less commonplace—which signifies the quite noteworthy fact that we have passed out

of the stage of easy acceptance of phrase and idea into the stage of individual creation.

Adults often complain that they have no opportunities for continuing their education. But here is a laboratory constantly at our command. We can place the microscope over our words and phrases; we can apply the scalpel of our analytic intelligence; we can experiment with our expressions, trying them out until they hit off exactly what we think we mean. We are curiously inhibited from doing all this by the quite misleading idea that words are only external after all and do not really count; that only our "inner thoughts" count. If we could clearly grasp the idea that the words are our thought-responses, that vague words and phrases indicate vague thoughts, precisely as a carpenter is known by his tools, we should realize that we sharpen our thoughts not by some esoteric process of turning inward, but by deliberately working away at the symbols which we use to convey to others what we mean. When we do that we begin to be able to say things in ways that are not easily forgotten.

Words and phrases, then, are far more than mere symbols about which we can be relatively indifferent. They are perhaps the most powerful instrumentalities we possess for effectively and permanently lodging ideas in the mind. To be able to devise a name or a phrase that will stick, is to have a way of entry into the mind that is swift and sure.

Again, to pay careful attention to the "pointing up" of one's words and phrases; in other words, to try to be less commonplace in one's verbal expression, is not simply to engage in a kind of literary polishing. It is to engage in a process of sharpening and clarifying one's mind.

Hence, attention to words and phrases has a profound psychological significance. He who would influence human behavior can hardly do better than to proceed quite seriously and persistently to overhaul his verbal equipment.

THE LEVELS OF ENGLISH SPEECH*

By George P. Krapp

(Since 1910, George P. Krapp has been Professor of English at Columbia University. Among the long list of books given under his name there are of special interest to college students: *The English Language in America*, 2 vols., 1925; *A Comprehensive Guide to Good English*, 1927; and *The Knowledge of English*, 1927.)

In the fluctuations of daily use, the separation of English into types or kinds is a matter of such common experience that certain well determined manners of expression are readily observable. Whether these types shall be known as dialects, a term perhaps sufficiently discussed in a preceding chapter, is a question of definition over which it is not necessary to delay at present. But the types of expression themselves, and the mental attitudes for which they stand, are of some interest as helpful guides among the many possible directions to which English speech may turn.

Among those who pay any heed at all to convention in social relationships, a difference of degree is implicit in all use of English. This difference of degree is usually thought of in terms of higher and lower, of upper levels of speech appropriate to certain occasions of more formal character, of lower levels existing, if not necessarily appropriate, among less elevated circumstances. These popular distinctions of level may be accepted without weighting them too heavily with significance in respect of good, better, and best in speech. A disputatious person might very well raise the question whether literary English, ordinarily regarded as being on a high level, is really any better than the spoken word, is really as good as the spoken word, warm with the breath of the living moment. In accepting these distinctions of level as a point of departure, however, the purpose in the present

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chapter will not be to debate any remote and theoretical questions of values, but rather to proceed from distinctions generally recognized, even though not very conclusively defined, in order to observe the grounds upon which they are based.

When one arranges things according to a system of levels, perhaps the simplest way to regard the system is to fix one's attention first on the middle level, to which the outer upper and lower levels may then be related as extremes. What then is the middle level of English speech, that form of it which is least open to qualification of a special kind, which stands, one may say, as a kind of pivotal center in the revolving universe of the English language?

This speech must obviously be the one in the operations of which the normal qualities of speech as a general social activity most representatively reveal themselves, both as we look at speech today and as we look back upon it in the perspective of its changes through countless ages of evolution. The name most appropriate for this central and pivotal English is General Colloquial. Of all the forms of speech this is the one least conditioned by special applications, being the speech not of occasional experiences but the constant companion of the great middle group of English speaking persons in all their familiar moments. A degree lower than General Colloquial brings one to the level of Popular English, and a step still lower—beyond which there seems to be no need to proceed—brings one to the level of Vulgar English. Starting again at the middle level of General Colloquial and moving in the opposite direction, the first stage is reached at Formal Colloquial, and the next and final upper limit at Literary English. Concerning each of these levels of English speech it is now necessary to add a few words of further qualification and description.

In its simple etymological sense the term "colloquial" means spoken, and colloquial English would therefore be the

English of spoken conversation. As here employed, however, and especially with the qualification "general" added to it, the word means something a little more narrowly defined. It means that language of conversation which passes as acceptable anywhere in conversation, a language easy without being slovenly or illiterate, and conventional without being formal or pedantic. It is a form of language which raises no questions, its ends being adequately attained when it secures a harmonious understanding among persons in their social relationships. It is necessarily a language of cultivated conversation, a more or less chosen English, since only the cultivated person has command of those forms of speech which enable the speaker to take his place easily in any group of persons with whom the chances of living may bring him in contact.

That this speech has characteristics appropriate to itself, and therefore its own justifications, becomes readily apparent when one examines the details of it. In such simple matters as contractions, for example, colloquial speech employs forms which custom everywhere sanctions as proper to the tone of conversation. Thus one does not say *I am leaving town tomorrow*, though one might write this. What one says is *I'm leaving town tomorrow*. Other similar contractions are *they're* for *they are*, *he'd* for *he would*, *mustn't* for *must not*, and so almost without end. Conversation which avoided such forms would cease to be normal conversation, would lose all that quality of ease and naturalness which is necessary to make conversation endurable. To regard such forms of speech as corruptions or as careless lapses from propriety would be to violate the essential nature of colloquial speech. For the merits of conversational English cannot be estimated by applying to it tests of excellence which may be appropriate in different styles of speech. At times one may be in doubt whether one should or should not be conversational, but then the question raised is one of choice between two levels.

Thus one may hesitate in writing over the choice between *he isn't* and *he is not, they'll* and *they will*, but the matter to be decided here is whether one wishes to carry over the color of colloquial speech into writing and into print or to change from a familiar to a more formal style. Each may have its own justifications, but the qualities of the one are not determined by the qualities of the other.

Colloquial tone is not merely a matter of contractions, but it appears also in a great variety of other uses. The current intensives and adjectives of approval and disapproval frequently express the distinctively colloquial quality of speech. Thus any cultivated speaker might say *I'm awfully sorry to have missed you* without hesitation, though in more formal English the word *awfully* would probably be used only with recognition of its historical and literary connotations. Every language is rich in these expressive terms which have been more or less torn from their etymological settings, but which are not exaggerations, since the conventions of colloquial use have made them appropriate to the somewhat heightened tone of colloquial occasions. If a man were going to a concert and leaving his wife at home with a headache, he might very properly say *I hate to go away and have a good time and leave you here alone*, and the wife might well answer, *O! don't mind me, I'll get along*, yet the verbs *hate* and *mind* in these sentences, and the phrase *get along*, to say nothing of the structure of the sentences as wholes, are all so characteristic of colloquial use that elsewhere they would be out of place. But to deprive colloquial speech of these expressive turns would deliver the death blow to all conversation. Conversation may be toned down and formalized, but every alteration in these directions is a move away from those qualities which give conversation its essential character. By cultivation any person may acquire the habit of speaking like a book, but nobody can at the same time speak like a book and a living human being.

Cultivation in colloquial speech is an admirable thing, but only when it is cultivation in the right direction. . . .

The determining mark of General Colloquial English as here described being its acceptability as the speech of cultivated conversation, so the distinctive thing about Popular English is that it lacks this acceptability, that it is not, in other words, an admired and cultivated form of speech. On the popular level belong all those types of speech commonly designated as incorrect, ungrammatical, illiterate, provincial, rustic, and so through various other degrees of more or less qualified discommendation. Numerically it is not the speech of a small or limited class, for the distinctive forms of popular speech are undoubtedly often more widely distributed than the forms of General Colloquial speech. The term "general" in this terminology, however, does not mean approximately universal, but only generally acceptable in the circles in which propriety of speech is of some concern. The individual character of Popular English lies just in the fact that it is not generally acceptable on the cultivated level. It may be a highly effective, a vigorous and picturesque speech, the speech of persons esteemed for their integrity, for their ability, or for any number of virtues. It often has something of the poetic quality found in the ballads and other forms of folk poetry. These virtues have nothing to do with the fact, however, that certain customs of speech are acceptable in cultivated conversation and others are not. Neither is it a matter of importance that these acceptable customs are established by convention, and that in themselves they may be no better than the customs current on the popular level. Argument on such questions as social proprieties is of little avail. When a person who uses Popular English is described as "a very nice, ungrammatical person," this description places both the one described and the one who does the describing with no little exactness in a social scale. The term "popular" manifestly does not necessarily carry with

it any implications of contempt or scorn. One may love one's fellow-beings even if they are ungrammatical—that is, with the kind of love with which one loves the world at large. Or if with more fervor, then because the ardors of passion have for the time triumphed over the serener enthusiasms of respect for convention. . . .

Like the word "colloquial" as designating a level of speech, the term "vulgar" is susceptible of a double meaning, the one taken from the etymological origins of the word, the other a secondary and derivative sense. By origin the word "vulgar" means merely common, that which is the common possession of the people. Thus the Vulgate is the Latin translation of the Bible, Latin being the vulgar or common tongue of Italy in the fourth century when the translation was made. In English the phrase *vulgar tongue* still survives in the sense of the common language of a people, not merely the language of common people, but the general national idiom, as contrasted for example with some learned, literary, or otherwise limited kind of speech. So also we speak of *vulgar errors*, meaning thereby things generally but wrongly believed. But it is not this primary sense of vulgar which is intended here as descriptive of a level of speech. From it readily issued a secondary meaning as designating things offensive to persons of refinement or good taste. The word "common" has gone the same way as vulgar, that which is common being not merely general but sometimes also coarse and offensive. What then is it in language which justifies one in applying this term "vulgar" to it at certain levels? What is it that makes language coarse and offensive?

In the first place a distinction must be made between language itself and its content, on the one hand, and the social implications and connotations of language on the other. For example, when the ungrammatical person uses a singular verb with a plural subject, or a wrong form of a past tense, *done* for *did*, *seen* for *saw*, or says *you was*, or

them men, or does any one of the many regrettable things which the speaker on the popular level may unconcernedly do, these forms of language in themselves and regarded merely as linguistic phenomena cannot be stigmatized as coarse and offensive. Many of the forms of conventional cultivated speech have originated in exactly the same way, and even a cursory examination of the history of English inflections will show that our present standard and simplified system has been the result of an extraordinarily violent and destructive treatment of older and more elaborate conventional uses. If *I done it* seems vulgar, therefore, this is not because of something inherently offensive in the mechanism of the words as a language process, and of course not in the thought, which is exactly the same as when the cultivated speaker says *I did it*. The vulgarity of the phrase, if it is present, must therefore arise from the associations and connotations of the words. A person who says *I done it* is obviously one heedless of or unaware of the conventions of cultivated speech. Not only his habits of speech but in all probability many of his other personal habits will be different from those of a more highly conventionalized society. These differences the conventional person may sum up by saying that the speech of the uncultivated speaker is vulgar. Yet certainly he must be a person of very tender susceptibility who should find differences of social custom coarse and offensive when these differences rest merely upon differences in conventional habit. Merely Popular English like this will not often be confused by sensible persons with Vulgar English. The former has not the stamp of approval of good cultivated use, but on its own level it gets along very well without it, and even when speakers from the popular and the general colloquial level meet and mix, satisfactory social intercourse through the forms of language is still humanly possible. In reality English is vulgar only when it expresses facts or situations which in themselves are inherently offen-

sive to good taste. The vulgarity is consequently not a vulgarity of language primarily, but a vulgarity of content. . . .

The most important observation to be made with respect to these several levels of English speech is that no one of them implies a condemnation of the others. Each has its own right to existence, except perhaps the lowest level. As the distinctive speech of those who exhibit a brutal insensitiveness to the preferences, tastes, and feelings of others, little can be said in defense of Vulgar English. But life would certainly lose some of its charm if all forms of popular speech should pass out of existence. The conventions which prevail on the cultivated colloquial level are comfortable and save a great deal of trouble, yet are scarcely so authentic as to acquire the right to supersede all other customs of speech. Cultivated speech indeed continually restores and refreshes itself by imbibing some of the untroubled waters drawn from the well of unsophisticated speech. That popular speech is a well of English pure and undefiled one might hesitate to say. Simple life and simple customs nevertheless often have a health-giving directness of a beneficent influence. In the matter of language, for example, they continually check the cultivated speech in its tendency to develop towards elaborate and bloodless refinement. These are justifications of popular English from the point of view of cultivated colloquial speech. But obviously from its own point of view, popular English calls for no justification. It meets adequately the needs in language of the speakers who employ it, and it provides in many ways a more perfect adaptation of speech to its environment than the English of any other level.

The justifications of English on the formal colloquial and on the literary level are self-evident. They are indeed easily exaggerated, owing to the common human tendency to lift rarified and impersonal aspirations to positions of exceptional authority. But just as the popular speech provides a cor-

rective against excessive refinement in cultivated colloquial speech, so this latter in turn, like a magnet imbedded in the life-giving earth, always draws back to it the eccentricities of the formal and literary speech when they wander too far from the center. The special occasion must have its appropriate language, but a limited language, since the occasion is special. It is a language perhaps too good for human nature's daily food. Its goodness or badness, however, as a speech for all needs is beside the point, since no speech can be that. The conclusion one must come to, therefore, when one looks at English from the point of view of levels is that the first requirement of all English is that it shall be appropriate to the circumstances that attend it. A very large element in establishing the goodness of any use of English must lie in a sensitive realization of the tone one wishes to maintain. Anyone who is aware of the levels of English speech and begins to learn how to keep them has gone a long way towards the mastery of good English. The categories here described are by no means exhaustive, and to carry them further should prove a helpful exercise in the understanding of the many adaptabilities of English speech in its varied living moments.

THE ART OF WRITING*

By Havelock Ellis

(Havelock Ellis prepared himself for the profession of medicine, but he practiced only a few years before giving himself to scientific and literary work. For many years he has been one of the most prolific writers in England—there are some thirty volumes credited to him in *Who's Who*. He treats social and psychological problems. This essay contains the advice of a man of unusual experience and success.)

To write is thus an arduous intellectual task, a process which calls for the highest tension of the muscles in the

*Reprinted from *The Dance of Life*, by Havelock Ellis, by permission of, and arrangement with, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1923.

escalade of a heaven which the strongest and bravest and alertest can never hope to take by violence. He has to be true,—whether it is in the external world he is working or in his own internal world,—and as truth can only be seen through his own temperament, he is engaged in moulding the expression of a combination which has never been seen in the world before. . . .

Thus it is that to write is a strenuous intellectual task not to be achieved without the exercise of the best trained and most deliberate rational faculties. That is the outcome of the whole argument up to this point. There is so much bad writing in the world because writing has been dominated by ignorance and habit and prudery, and not least by the academic teachers and critics who have known nothing of what they claim to teach and were often themselves singular examples of how not to write. There has, on the other hand, been a little good writing here and there in the world, through the ages, because a few possessed not only courage and passion and patience, but knowledge and the concentrated intellectual attention, and the resolution to seek truth, and the conviction that, as they imagined, the genius they sought consisted in taking pains. . . .

Imitation, as psychologists have taught us to realise, is a part of instinct. When we begin to learn to write, it rarely happens that we are not imitators, and, for the most part, unconsciously. The verse of every young poet, however original he may afterwards grow, usually has plainly written across it the rhythmic signature of some great master whose work chances to be abroad in the world; once it was usually Tennyson, then Swinburne, now various later poets; the same thing happens with prose, but the rhythm of the signature is less easy to hear.

As a writer slowly finds his own centre of gravity, the influence of the rhythm of other writers ceases to be perceptible except in so far as it coincides with his own natural

movement and *tempo*. That is a familiar fact. We less easily realise, perhaps, that not only the tunes but the notes that they are formed of are, in every great writer, his own. In other words, he creates even his vocabulary. That is so not only in the more obvious sense that out of the mass of words that make up a language every writer uses only a limited number and even among these has his words of predilection. It is in the meanings he gives to words, to names, that a writer creates his vocabulary. All language, we know, is imagery and metaphor; even the simplest names of the elementary things are metaphors based on resemblances that suggested themselves to the primitive men who made language. It is not otherwise with the aboriginal man of genius who uses language to express his new vision of the world. He sees things charged with energy, or brilliant with color, or breathing out perfume, that the writers who came before him had overlooked, and to designate these things he must use names which convey the qualities he has perceived. Guided by his own new personal sensations and perceptions, he creates his metaphorical vocabulary. . . .

For most of those who deliberately seek to learn to write, words seem generally to be felt as of less importance than the art of arranging them. It is thus that the learner in writing tends to become the devoted student of grammar and syntax whom we came across at the outset. That is indeed a tendency which always increases. Civilization develops with a conscious adhesion to formal order, and the writer—writing by fashion or by ambition and not by divine right of creative instinct—follows the course of civilization. It is an unfortunate tendency, for those whom it affects conquer by their number. As we know, writing that is real is not learnt that way. Just as the solar system was not made in accordance with the astronomer's laws, so writing is not made by the laws of grammar. Astronomer and grammarian alike can only come in at the end, to give a generalised de-

scription of what usually happens in the respective fields it pleases them to explore. When a new comet, cosmic or literary, enters their sky, it is their descriptions which have to be readjusted, and not the comet. There seems to be no more pronounced mark of the decadence of a people and its literature than a servile and rigid subserviency to rule. It can only make for ossification, for anchylosis, for petrification all the milestones on the road of death. In every age of democratic plebeianism, where each man thinks he is as good a writer as the others, and takes his laws from the others, having no laws of his own nature, it is down this steep path that men, in a flock, inevitably run.

THE QUESTION OF STYLE*

By Arnold Bennett

(Arnold Bennett, born in 1867, has long been a popular English writer of essays and novels. He has written the novels of the Five Towns, but perhaps his best novel is *The Old Wives' Tales*. As editor and writer he has naturally been interested in questions of style and of literary values. The extract which follows, from *Literary Taste and How to Form It*, presents very clearly the fact that one cannot learn to write merely by studying style manuals, that one learns to write only as he uses all the resources of language to hew his thought into acceptable form.)

In discussing the value of particular books, I have heard people say—people who were timid about expressing their views of literature in the presence of literary men: "It may be bad from a literary point of view, but there are very good things in it." Or: "I dare say the style is very bad, but really the book is very interesting and suggestive." Or: "I'm not an expert, and so I never bother my head about good style. All I ask for is good matter. And when I have

* Reprinted by permission from *Literary Taste and How to Form It*, by Arnold Bennett, published by Doubleday, Doran and Company, Inc., 1909.

got it, critics may say what they like about the book." And many other similar remarks, all showing that in the minds of the speakers there existed a notion that style is something supplementary to, and distinguishable from, matter; a sort of notion that a writer who wanted to be classical had first to find and arrange his matter, and then dress it up elegantly in a costume of style, in order to please beings called literary critics.

This is a misapprehension. Style cannot be distinguished from matter. When a writer conceives an idea he conceives it in a form of words. That form of words constitutes his style, and it is absolutely governed by the idea. The idea can only exist in words, and it can only exist in one form of words. You cannot say exactly the same thing in two different ways. Slightly alter the expression, and you slightly alter the idea. Surely it is obvious that the expression cannot be altered without altering the thing expressed! A writer, having conceived and expressed an idea, may, and probably will, "polish it up." But what does he polish up? To say that he polishes up his style is merely to say that he is polishing up his idea, that he has discovered faults or imperfections in his idea, and is perfecting it. An idea exists in proportion as it is expressed; it exists when it is expressed, and not before. It expresses itself. A clear idea is expressed clearly, and a vague idea vaguely. You need but take your own case and your own speech. For just as science is the development of common-sense, so is literature the development of common daily speech. The difference between science and common-sense is simply one of degree; similarly with speech and literature. Well, when you "know what you think," you succeed in saying what you think, in making yourself understood. When you "don't know what to think," your expressive tongue halts. And note how in daily life the characteristics of your style follow your mood; how tender it is when you are tender, how violent when you are violent.

You have said to yourself in moments of emotion: "If only I could write—," etc. You were wrong. You ought to have said: "If only I could *think*—on this high plane." When you have thought clearly you have never had any difficulty in saying what you thought, though you may occasionally have had some difficulty in keeping it to yourself. And when you cannot express yourself, depend upon it that you have nothing precise to express, and that what incommodes you is not the vain desire to express, but the vain desire to *think* more clearly. All this just to illustrate how style and matter are co-existent, and inseparable, and alike.

You cannot have good matter with bad style. Examine the point more closely. A man wishes to convey a fine idea to you. He employs a form of words. That form of word is his style. Having read, you say: "Yes, this idea is fine." The writer has therefore achieved his end. But in what imaginable circumstances can you say: "Yes, this idea is fine, but the style is not fine"? The sole medium of communication between you and the author has been the form of words. The fine idea has reached you. How? In the words, by the words. Hence the fineness must be in the words. You may say, superiorly: "He has expressed himself clumsily, but I can *see* what he means." By what light? By something in the words, in the style. That something is fine. Moreover, if the style is clumsy, are you sure that you can see what he means? You cannot be quite sure. And, at any rate, you cannot see distinctly. The "matter" is what actually reaches you, and it must necessarily be affected by the style.

Still further to comprehend what style is, let me ask you to think of a writer's style exactly as you would think of the gestures and manners of an acquaintance. You know the man whose demeanor is "always calm," but whose passions are strong. How do you know that his passions are strong? Because he "gives them away" by some small, but important,

part of his demeanor, such as the twitching of a lip or the whitening of the knuckles caused by clenching the hand. In other words, his demeanor, fundamentally, is not calm. You know the man who is always "smoothly polite and agreeable," but who affects you unpleasantly. Why does he affect you unpleasantly? Because he is tedious, and therefore disagreeable, and because his politeness is not real politeness. You know the man who is awkward, shy, clumsy, but who, nevertheless, impresses you with a sense of dignity and force. Why? Because mingled with that awkwardness and so forth *is* dignity. You know the blunt, rough fellow whom you instinctively guess to be affectionate—because there is "something in his tone" or "something in his eyes." In every instance the demeanor, while perhaps seeming to be contrary to the character, is really in accord with it. The demeanor never contradicts the character. It is one part of the character that contradicts another part of the character. For, after all, the blunt man *is* blunt, and the awkward man *is* awkward, and these characteristics are defects. The demeanor merely expresses them. The two men would be better if, while conserving their good qualities, they had the superficial attributes of smoothness and agreeableness possessed by the gentleman who is unpleasant to you. And as regards this latter, it is not his superficial attributes which are unpleasant to you, but his other qualities. In the end the character is shown in the demeanor; and the demeanor is a consequence of the character and resembles the character. So with style and matter. You may argue that the blunt, rough man's demeanor is unfair to his tenderness. I do not think so. For his churlishness is really very trying and painful, even to the man's wife, though a moment's tenderness will make her and you forget it. The man really is churlish, and much more often than he is tender. His demeanor is merely just to his character. So, when a writer annoys you for ten pages and then enchants you for ten lines, you must

not explode against his style. You must not say that his style won't let his matter "come out." You must remember the churlish, tender man. The more you reflect, the more clearly you will see that faults and excellences of style are faults and excellences of matter itself.

One of the most striking illustrations of this neglected truth is Thomas Carlyle. How often has it been said that Carlyle's matter is marred by the harshness and the eccentricities of his style? But Carlyle's matter is harsh and eccentric to precisely the same degree as his style is harsh and eccentric. Carlyle was harsh and eccentric. His behavior was frequently ridiculous, if it were not abominable. His judgments were often extremely bizarre. When you read one of Carlyle's fierce diatribes, you say to yourself: "This is splendid. The man's enthusiasm for justice and truth is glorious." But you also say: "He is a little unjust and a little untruthful. He goes too far. He lashes too hard." These things are not the style; they are the matter. And when, as in his greatest moments, he is emotional and restrained at once, you say: "This is the real Carlyle." Kindly notice how perfect the style has become! No harshnesses or eccentricities now! And if that particular matter is the "real" Carlyle, then that particular style is Carlyle's "real" style. But when you say "real" you would more properly say "best." "This is the best Carlyle." If Carlyle had always been at his best he would have counted among the supreme geniuses of the world. But he was a mixture. His style is the expression of the mixture. The faults are only in the style because they are in the matter.

You will find that, in classical literature, the style always follows the mood of the matter. Thus, Charles Lamb's essay on "Dream Children" begins quite simply, in a calm, narrative manner, enlivened by a certain quippishness concerning the children. The style is grave when great-grandmother Field is the subject, and when the author passes to a rather

elaborate impression of the picturesque old mansion it becomes as it were consciously beautiful. This beauty is intensified in the description of the still more beautiful garden. But the real dividing point of the essay occurs when Lamb approaches his elder brother. He unmistakably marks the point with the phrase: "*Then, in somewhat a more heightened tone*, I told how," etc. Henceforward the style increases in fervor and in solemnity until the culmination of the essay is reached: "And while I stood gazing, both the children gradually grew fainter to my view, receding and still receding till nothing at last but two mournful features were seen in the uttermost distance, which without speech, strangely impressed upon me the effects of speech. . . ." Throughout, the style is governed by the matter. "Well," you say, "of course it is. It couldn't be otherwise. If it were otherwise it would be ridiculous. A man who made love as though he were preaching a sermon, or a man who preached a sermon as though he were teasing schoolboys, or a man who described a death as though he were describing a practical joke, must necessarily be either an ass or a lunatic." Just so. You have put it in a nutshell. You have disposed of the problem of style so far as it can be disposed of.

But what do those people mean who say: "I read such and such an author for the beauty of his style alone"? Personally, I do not clearly know what they mean (and I have never been able to get them to explain), unless they mean that they read for the beauty of sound alone. When you read a book there are only three things of which you may be conscious: (1) The significance of the words, which is inseparably bound up with the thought. (2) The look of the printed words on the page—I do not suppose that anybody reads any author for the visual beauty of the words on the page. (3) The sound of the words, either actually uttered or imagined by the brain to be uttered. Now it is indubitable that words differ in beauty of sound. To my mind one of

the most beautiful words in the English language is "pavement." Enunciate it, study its sound, and see what you think. It is also indubitable that certain combinations of words have a more beautiful sound than certain other combinations. Thus Tennyson held that the most beautiful line he ever wrote was:

"The mellow ousel fluting in the elm."

Perhaps, as sound, it was. Assuredly it makes a beautiful succession of sounds, and recalls the bird-sounds which it is intended to describe. But does it live in the memory as one of the rare great Tennysonian lines? It does not. It has charm, but the charm is merely curious or pretty. A whole poem composed of lines with no better recommendation than that line has would remain merely curious or pretty. It would not permanently interest. It would be as insipid as a pretty woman who had nothing behind her prettiness. It would not live. One may remark in this connection how the merely verbal felicities of Tennyson have lost our esteem. Who will now proclaim the *Idylls of the King* as a masterpiece? Of the thousands of lines written by him which please the ear, only those survive of which the matter is charged with emotion. No! As regards the man who professes to read an author "for his style alone," I am inclined to think either that he will soon get sick of that author, or that he is deceiving himself and means the author's general temperament—not the author's verbal style, but a peculiar quality which runs through all the matter written by the author. Just as one may like a man for something which is always coming out of him, which one cannot define, and which is of the very essence of the man.

In judging the style of an author, you must employ the same canons as you use in judging men. If you do this you will not be tempted to attach importance to trifles that are

negligible. There can be no lasting friendship without respect. If an author's style is such that you cannot *respect* it, then you may be sure that, despite any present pleasure which you may obtain from that author, there is something wrong with his matter, and that the pleasure will soon cloy. You must examine your sentiments towards an author. If when you have read an author you are pleased, without being conscious of aught but his mellifluousness, just conceive what your feelings would be after spending a month's holiday with a merely mellifluous man. If an author's style has pleased you, but done nothing except make you giggle, then reflect upon the ultimate tediousness of the man who can do nothing but jest. On the other hand, if you are impressed by what an author has said to you, but are aware of verbal clumsinesses in his work, you need worry about his "bad style" exactly as much and exactly as little as you would worry about the manners of a kind-hearted, keen-brained friend who was dangerous to carpets with a tea-cup in his hand. The friend's antics in a drawing-room are somewhat regrettable, but you would not say of him that his manners were bad. Again, if an author's style dazzles you instantly and blinds you to everything except its brilliant self, ask your soul, before you begin to admire his matter, what would be your final opinion of a man who at the first meeting fired his personality into you like a broad-side. Reflect that, as a rule, the people whom you have come to esteem communicated themselves to you gradually, that they did not begin the entertainment with fireworks. In short, look at literature as you would look at life, and you cannot fail to perceive that, essentially, the style is the man. Decidedly you will never assert that you care nothing for style, that your enjoyment of an author's matter is unaffected by his style. And you will never assert, either, that style alone suffices for you.

If you are undecided upon a question of style, whether leaning to the favorable or to the unfavorable, the most

prudent course is to forget that literary style exists. For, indeed, as style is understood by most people who have not analyzed their impressions under the influence of literature, there *is* no such thing as literary style. You cannot divide literature into two elements and say: This is matter and that style. Further, the significance and the worth of literature are to be comprehended and assessed in the same way as the significance and the worth of any other phenomenon: by the exercise of common-sense. Common-sense will tell you that nobody, not even a genius, can be simultaneously vulgar and distinguished, or beautiful and ugly, or precise and vague, or tender and harsh. And common-sense will therefore tell you that to try to set up vital contradictions between matter and style is absurd. When there is a superficial contradiction, one of the two mutually contradicting qualities is of far less importance than the other. If you refer literature to the standards of life, common-sense will at once decide which quality should count heaviest in your esteem. You will be in no danger of weighing a mere maladroitness of manner against a fine trait of character, or of letting a graceful deportment blind you to a fundamental vacuity. When in doubt, ignore style, and think of the matter as you would think of an individual.

PART III

LITERATURE

ODE*

We are the music-makers,
And we are the dreamers of dreams,
Wandering by lone sea-breakers,
And sitting by desolate streams;
World-losers and world-forsakers,
On whom the pale moon gleams:
Yet we are the movers and shakers
Of the world for ever, it seems.

With wonderful deathless ditties
We build up the world's great cities,
And out of a fabulous story
We fashion an empire's glory:
One man with a dream, at pleasure,
Shall go forth and conquer a crown;
And three with a new song's measure
Can trample an empire down.

We, in the ages lying
In the buried past of the earth,
Built Nineveh with our sighing,
And Babel itself with our mirth;
And o'erthrew them with prophesying
To the old of the new world's worth;
For each age is a dream that is dying,
Or one that is coming to birth.

—Arthur O'Shaughnessy

*Reprinted by permission from *Poems of Arthur O'Shaughnessy*, selected and edited by William Alexander Percy, published by The Yale University Press.

CHAPTER 6

LITERATURE AND THINKING

> **Art is a language and its mode is symbolism, and the thing that lies behind is the essential man in his highest estate.**
>
> —Ralph Adams Cram, *The Ministry of Art*

Emphasis has been placed in Part II upon the fact that language is a fundamental type of human behavior, and that it has been the primary tool which mankind has used to build up that system of values and mental techniques which we call our civilization. Most of the psychologists quoted spoke primarily of words. It seemed evident, however, that the sentence idiom—the customary orders of words in groups —which the child learns and without which he could never build new sentences out of the words he learns, is a somewhat larger symbol with the same values as those ascribed to words. A still larger and more complicated technique of organization, necessary for consecutive discursive thinking, was found in the logical outline. In Part III, we have to do with another group of techniques which the race has used as the instruments of evolution—the techniques of the arts. We are concerned especially with literature, but much that has been written about the other arts is equally true of literature.

There are many points from which we might approach the study of literature. We might consider it historically; we might follow the fortunes of various literary forms; we might consider its various techniques, and so on. In this respect, literature is much like football. One who is interested in training football teams will naturally write about the technique of the game, the various possible plays, how to train

the men—in short, how to win games. But one who is interested in the physical health and the intellectual development of the young people in our colleges and universities will discuss football from an entirely different standpoint.

Professional writers will discuss literary techniques, and the ways to reach the public interest and pocket, or to satisfy their own esthetic ideals. These technical matters are the perfectly proper materials for an elective course open to those who are expecting to become writers. But for us, in this preliminary study of literature, the approach should ordinarily be from the standpoint of our own literary experiences, and their function in our efforts to build satisfactory attitudes.

The Vocabulary of Literary Discussion

The chief difficulty in speaking about literature, or about any other form of art, is a language difficulty. In speaking of the esthetic experiences it is necessary to use figures of speech. When writers speak of art as a "universal language," or a "symbol of divine revelation," or say that it "appeals not only to the reason but also to the heart," or when they define beauty as the "consciousness of a rhythm already existing between our senses and the nature world," they are using tropes. The words seem simple and may awaken no question in the mind of the student; but the meanings implied in these phrases have never come into the consciousness of the average student, either in the elementary school or in the college.

From the very nature of language, words can have meaning for the individual only in so far as he associates them with appropriate experiences. In the life of the individual or of the race, consciousness of esthetic experience arises slowly and late. The first step in any discussion of art is the identification of the mental functions which may be classed as esthetic.

Literature an Experience, Not a Book

When we speak of literature, most of us think of books. Most discussions of the teaching of literature begin and end with books. But what is literature? Evidently it is not the cloth and paper and glue which go to make up a book. It is equally evident that it is not the ink marks on the page. Nor is it the excitation of the optic nerves as we read the following poem by Robert Frost:

The Road Not Taken[1]

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

[1] Reprinted by permission from *Mountain Interval*, by Robert Frost, published by Henry Holt and Company, 1916.

As one reads this poem, certain things happen within his consciousness. According to the experience of the reader and his habit of more or less vivid imaginative realization, he visualizes the two roads and feels the lure of the two untrodden paths beckoning into the heart of the colorful forest. He feels the slight hesitation of the traveler and something of the inevitableness of the decision which rests upon the merest whim. A statement in matter of fact terms, such as "The decisions which determine the entire course of life often are made upon very slight emotional impulses," does not carry the same emotional conviction. The poet has, through his imagination, given form in our consciousness to otherwise unrelated experiences. This form into which our consciousness is cast gives the value to the experience and may be said to be the poem. This imaginative forming of experience is the central fact in all literary art, whether in a short poem such as the one quoted or in *Hamlet* or *Jean-Christophe*. The reader who receives only a series of disconnected experiences has found no poem in the lines and receives no value from them.

The power to reshape experience by means of the imagination is not the possession of the poet alone. I once sat in the circle around a stove in the only public house at a railway junction. The other members of the circle were workmen from the roundhouse. These men, one especially, were excellent story tellers and spent the long evening recounting their experiences and dreams. The stories were often crude and embodied crude ideas of value, but these men were doing for themselves what the poet did for us, casting experience into imaginative form to taste its flavor. The impulse which set them talking and gave form to their speech was natural to them, and as undifferentiated in their consciousness as the circulation of the blood.

One who has an important public duty to perform or an engagement to meet is likely to think over in advance the

approaching situation in an attempt to meet it effectively. After the event he will live it over again in imagination to convince himself that he did his part well, or to find where he could have done it better. This reshaping of experience, whether in the form of a story of the past or of a possible future, or merely for the fun of seeing what will result from the new combination, is the very essence of art. Whether it be a fish story or an *Idylls of the King*, a bit of neighborhood gossip or a *Ring and the Book*, a child's story of hunting bears or Fogazzaro's[2] *The Saint*, they are all of a kind.

A Universal Experience

The impulse which leads to this imaginative tasting of life is as natural and universal as the impulse to take food. But the impulse to take food arises from a need definitely located in the bodily organism which, if not satisfied, leads to great pain and ultimately to death. This impulse to take food is so insistent and so definitely localized in the body that primitive man became acutely aware of it and gave it a name. We call it hunger. But the impulse to the imaginative reshaping of experience, the impulse to artistic expression, is not localized in a definite bodily organ; its denial does not produce localized pain; it does not have to be satisfied at stated intervals; it has in it no more element of self-consciousness than the impulse of the child to chase a butterfly. Because of the pervasiveness of the impulse and its universality, the unreflective mind never became aware of it and never gave it a name. We can speak of it only by means of a trope, and call it a natural impulse or a spiritual hunger.

This fundamental identity of impulse and its manner of satisfaction in the life of the child, of the man of the street, and of the poet has escaped the attention of those writers on

[2] Italian statesman, poet, and novelist of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

literature and the teaching of literature who have studied only the small section of literature printed in books. It has almost equally escaped the attention of those who have attempted to determine the nature of art by studying the vaguely realized facts of the lives of primitive people. The student who says, "I do not like literature," is not stating a fact. He is merely unfortunate in that he has never associated his own literary activities with the word literature. The question is never, "Shall we 'take' literature or be without it?" The question always is, "Shall we be left to the primitive satisfactions of an undisciplined imagination which presents life experiences in distorted relations, or shall we be led to wider and truer organizations of life through the medium of the greater works of art?"

It was some such analysis as this which led George E. Woodberry to say that the "poetic impulse is universal," and to add, "The poetic life is not the privilege of some, but the path of all, and the passion and power to lead it is the measure of every man's soul." Benedetto Croce had these same facts of human experience in mind when he wrote, "We have each of us, as a matter of fact, a little of the poet, of the sculptor, of the musician, of the painter, of the prose writer." Ralph Adams Cram was thinking of a human situation only slightly more intense and specialized than those here used as examples when he wrote, "To art men turned when the joy of living and the wonder of spiritual experience and the passion of religious ardour became intolerable in their poignancy and clamorous for perfect expression; to art we must return, that, by its talismanic potency it may unlock the barred gates of human experience."[3]

As true and beautiful as these expressions are, they may be without meaning to the average student. He denies that he has ever been guilty of a poetic impulse. Or if he has on occasion, under the stress of a new and strong emotion,

[3] *The Ministry of Art*, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1914, p. 101.

been guilty of attempting to write a poem, he very likely considers the impulse to be exotic and abnormal, and is somewhat ashamed of it. Only when he sees that the words poetry and art and literature are not names of mysterious and often meaningless things, but the figurative language used to identify certain definite types of his own experience, can he become aware of the truth of these statements. Then, and then only, can he begin to appreciate the difference between his own imaginative functioning and that of the artist.

Yrjö Hirn,[4] perhaps better than most writers, makes it clear that discussion of art and literature should begin with these normal human experiences and not with "the ideal work of art as it appears among civilized nations." He says, "It is, no doubt, the fact that the percentage of executive artists in modern nations is an almost negligible quantity. But in treating the art-impulse as a psychological phenomenon the inquiry cannot be restricted to a few individuals who publicly practice a certain art. As far as artistic powers are concerned, these undoubtedly stand apart from the rest of mankind. But we are not entitled to maintain that they are also distinguished by some peculiar psychical impulse."[5]

Benedetto Croce, discussing this identity of activity in the common man and in the poet, says, "Nor can we admit that the word genius or artistic genius, as distinct from the non-genius of the ordinary man, possesses more than a quantitative signification. Great artists are said to reveal us to ourselves. But how could this be possible, unless there be identity of nature between their imagination and ours and unless the difference be one of quantity?"[6] In the delightful volume, *The Meaning of Culture*, John Cowper Powys says that the desirable effect of imaginative literature on one's mind is not to strengthen the memory or increase knowledge,

[4] Formerly lecturer on Aesthetics and Modern Literature at the University of Finland.

[5] *The Origins of Art*, Macmillan and Company, Limited, 1900, p. 21.

[6] *Aesthetic*, Macmillan and Company, Limited, 1909, p. 24.

nor yet to lead to the collection of passages from "great authors," but "it is to encourage one to learn the art of becoming a 'great author' oneself; not in the sense of composing a single line, but in the sense of sufficiently detaching oneself from the chaotic spectacle of reality so as to catch on the wing that fleeting loveliness of which no genius has the monopoly and which only the stirred depths of one's own deepest nature can prevail upon to pause in its eternal flight."

The esthetic impulse, which arises "from the emotional urgency of life itself," no one can escape. But there are a few in whom it is especially strong. Because, perhaps, of a certain fineness of nervous organization, or of certain habits and skills acquired in childhood, they become artists. The early chapters of *Jean-Christophe*, a novel by the French writer, Romain Rolland, give the best picture in literature of the manner in which the natural musical aptitude of a child was recognized and developed. It is reasonable to suppose that similar aptitude in many children is never discovered.

These favored few, in the words of Croce, "have a greater aptitude, a more frequent inclination fully to express certain complex states of the soul. These men are known in ordinary language as artists. Some very complicated and difficult expressions are more rarely achieved and these are called works of art."[7] Shelley says that those in whom this faculty "exists in excess are poets, in the most universal sense of the word, and the pleasure resulting from the manner in which they express the influence of society or nature upon their minds, communicates itself to others, and gathers a sort of reduplication from the community."

Literature an Organizing Technique

Many people assume that the chief distinguishing characteristic of the artist is his technical skill in expressing his

[7] *Op. cit.*, p. 22.

thought in terms which others can understand—that all of us have within our souls such scenes and figures as the artists have, but do not know how to make them visible to others. The classic story of the sculptor who looked at the block of marble and saw therein the beautiful form which he liberated with his mallet and chisel tends to support this assumption. Nothing could be much further from the truth. Art is not a dress of thought, it is the tool for organizing thought. As words are necessary to fix and clarify and convey simple meaning,—are the tools of thinking—so art is necessary to fix and clarify and convey the larger thoughts of the artist,—it is the tool of imaginative synthesis. We may think of potatoes and silks and stocks and bonds in terms of simple words, but only in the larger imaginative constructions can we think of love and honor and religion and beauty.

The discussions of literary form and content which characterized my school-day study led us to think that the two were separable, that a poet might have a beautiful thought but lack the technical skill to put it into effective form. The discussion, somewhat earlier in this book, of the function of art in giving form to experience may suggest that such a view does not fit the facts. It would seem that form is the essence of art and that there is no possibility of an underlying thought more true or more beautiful than the form in which it is cast. The artist may handle experience worthy of being embodied in more effective form, but his own thought can be no other in truth or beauty than the form in which it is placed.

This function of art is clearly expressed by a French novelist and critic of the late nineteenth century, M. Victor Cherbuliez. He is speaking of the work of the painter, but his statement is equally true of the artist who uses words as his medium.

"It is not necessary to agree with Schleiermacher[8] that the work of art exists already in its entirety within the mind of the artist before he has realized his thought in the marble or on the canvas. The thought is always more or less clouded, more or less confused; it is not yet disengaged from its covering, or rather it is an incomplete rudiment, an indistinct first draft where one perceives only the principal lineaments of the work; it is an embryo of which the organs are not yet developed. It is in the labor of executing his plan that the artist comes to conceive it clearly and distinctly; it is in giving his thought outward form that he makes it clear to himself. The composition and the execution are two phases of the work of the artist which abstraction alone can distinguish; in the process, they are not distinguished, and the painter composes until the last stroke of the brush which he gives to his canvas."[9]

The Function of Literature

The universality and naturalness of the impulse to the imaginative reforming of the experiences of actual life suggest that it is a vital function, necessary to the normal development of the individual and of the race. It is therefore pertinent to ask ourselves what service this type of activity performs. As a characteristic human function it does not await human understanding before giving its service. The heart performed its function for ages before that function was understood. The part played by the esthetic activity is too vital in the evolution of the race to depend for its effect upon the capricious understanding of the individual. It is the province of the student who would develop any natural function to examine it and find its natural laws of operation and its place among the evolutionary forces.

[8] A German writer of the nineteenth century.

[9] Quoted by Hiram Corson in *The Voice and Spiritual Education*, pp. 186-187.

The child runs and shouts and plays with his toys. The immediate purpose of these activities is the pleasure he receives. But the racial value of these activities is that through them the individual establishes the coordinations which will make him able to control his body; through them he learns the force of the law of gravity and the physical properties of matter, of which he has never heard. These ultimate forms of knowledge are what the race demands of the child, not the pleasure of the activity. Nature has assured the presence of the necessary knowledge and coordination by making the activities through which they are acquired pleasurable. We have learned to take advantage of these naturally pleasurable activities to guide the child to a surer and more effective control of himself in his nature environment than he would receive if left unguided. The child just as naturally builds pictures and stories in his imagination out of the materials furnished him by his mental life and his association with his human environment. His immediate purpose is the pleasure these activities give him. Here again, the ultimate purpose is other than the pleasure. Through these pictures and stories he learns human values and controls. Through them he tests different modes of activity and finds some good and some bad, some satisfactory and some unsatisfactory. The disconnected experiences of his actual life have no value for him until they are formed into some kind of interpreting system through the imagination. This manner of evaluating life is what makes him a man, not an animal. If education is the conscious influence of one person in enabling another to adjust himself more effectively to his environment, then education must work primarily through this human function. Joseph Conrad, in *A Personal Record* says that "only in men's imagination does every truth find effective and undeniable existence. Imagination, not invention, is the supreme master of art as of life."

During the processes of social evolution, it has come about naturally that certain individuals, because of superior endowment, have assumed leadership in the various types of human activity. Those in whom the urge to imaginative construction and the skill in expression have united have become artists. Through their leadership the race has been led to the recognition of more complicated and often to truer values. "As the evolution of knowledge proceeds by truer and more necessary knowledge dislodging and replacing what is mistaken and unnecessary," says Tolstoi, "so the evolution of feeling proceeds through art,—feelings less kind and less needful to the well-being of mankind are replaced by others kinder and more needful to that end." "The misfortune of us all," says Leonid Andreev,[10] "is that we know so little, even nothing, about one another—neither about the soul, nor the life, the sufferings, the habits, the inclinations, the aspirations of one another. Literature, which I have the honor to serve, is dear to me just because the noblest task it sets before itself is that of wiping out boundaries and distances."

The function of the arts in building a synthesis of the isolated experiences of life, an isolation intensified in the schools by the artificial parcelling out of the curriculum into departments, is well stated by Ralph Adams Cram in the lecture quoted in this chapter.

In order that literature may have the power over life to replace less kind and needful emotions by kinder and more needful, to break down the barriers of ignorance which separate us from a sympathetic understanding of our fellow men, to build up a new synthesis which shall give all life a truer meaning, it is necessary that some of the present misconceptions be removed. Many students of literature, under the influence of the scientific spirit of the age, have turned

[10] Russian novelist and dramatist who died in 1919.

to literary forms and have given us endless classifications and sub-classifications. This work is not without its value. No one can legitimately object to the fact that certain men find satisfaction in these objective studies. But so far as our own education is concerned, attention needs to be focused upon literature as a way of thinking common to all men, rather than upon classifications of books. We must free ourselves from the assumption, all too prevalent in the schools and in the study clubs, that the end of the study of art and literature is knowledge of the facts of authorship and of classifications.

The end of art is never the work of art itself, as the object of eating a dinner is neither the knowledge of food values nor the pleasure of eating. The student of literature who would utilize his literary impulses in the process of his education, in effecting more adequate adjustments to life, must always center his attention on life and not on art. Art must ever be referred back to life for its values. It is not an end, but a means. To cultivate sensitiveness to the beauties of art and at the same time to remain insensitive to the beauties of life and nature around us is to pervert one of the most significant of our natural human functions.

Literature and Life

No artist can transfer to the canvas or the book all the beauty he has seen in nature or in life. Art for him is a laboratory in which he isolates the forces of life, recombines them, studies them apart from the complexities of actual living, in order that he may understand them better. Perhaps no man of his generation was more sensitive to the beauties of art and literature than was William Sharp. Writing to his wife from Rome, he says,

"Do not be provoked with me when I say that Signa, for instance, is more beautiful than Rome—and that the flashing

of sunlight in the waters of the fountains, the green of Spring in the flowered fields and amongst the trees, and the songs of birds and the little happy-eyed children, mean infinitely more to me than the grandest sculptures, the noblest frescoes, and the finest paintings."

And again,

"Often when walking in the Cascine by myself at sunset I have heard a thrush or a blackbird call to its mate through the gloom of the trees, or when looking toward Morello and the Appenine chain and seeing them aglow with wonderful softness, or, on the Arno's banks I have seen the river washing in silver ripples and rosy light above the Pisan sea—often at such times my thrill of passionate and sometimes painful delight is followed by an irrepressible conviction that such things are to me more beautiful, more worthy of worship, more full of meaning, more significant of life, more excelling in all manner of loveliness, than all the treasures of the Uffizi and the Pitti, the Vatican and Louvre put together."[11]

In "Fra Lippo Lippi," Browning has given classic expression to the function which painting may perform in showing us beauties in nature which we might not otherwise have seen. The function of literature in giving new shape to our experiences is equally important.

"We're made so that we love
First when we see them painted, things we have passed
Perhaps a hundred times nor cared to see;
And so they are better, painted—better to us,
Which is the same thing. Art was given for that;
God uses us to help each other so,
Lending our minds out."

[11] William Sharp (Fiona Macleod), *A Memoir by Elizabeth A. Sharp*, Duffield and Company, 1910, Vol. I, pp. 133, 134.

Literary Value Personal

This discussion will have indicated, perhaps, that the value of a work of art is always personal. It lies in the moment of intenser living—of heightened awareness, in the more effective organization of life attitudes which it may produce, either in the artist or in the beholder. The reader finds a poem of significance only when he himself is able to re-live the vision of the poet and find the experience satisfactory.

The average student may not be able to re-live much of the literature of the past. In *Oxford Lectures on Poetry*, J. W. Mackail says that the "poetry of the past is our inheritance, and it is priceless; but it is not enough. The poetry of each age must reinterpret and reincarnate life anew. Not the art which we inherit, but the art which we create, is our own art, the expression of our own lives."

Goldsmith was a great poet in his age. But his personal and social incompetence, as well as his sensitiveness to the simple emotions of the common people, determined the forms into which he cast life. Burns was a great poet. But his intellectual limitations and social provincialism are part of his life values. If any teacher, because of personal magnetism and enthusiasm, has led you to an uncritical acceptance of the views of life contained in many of the writings of these poets, he has done both the poets and you a great disservice.

In the reading of our modern literature, also, you will do well to assume a critical attitude toward the life values presented. The pleasure you receive from the reading is not a negligible factor in judging its worth, but it is not the sole, nor yet the chief, criterion. Some men claim to have pleasure in getting drunk. One may receive pleasure from food that is poisonous. The uncritical reader is often lured by an interesting book to give pleasurable assent to racially

disapproved life values, and so to reverse the processes of social evolution.

If we can adopt this functional view of literature, we shall find ourselves working constructively with the most vital forces of our lives. So far in the history of education, the students have received their training almost entirely aside from the conscious processes and exercises of the schools. The chief function of the schools has been to give some necessary skills and to prolong the period of plastic growth, thus permitting a longer period for adjustments. Perhaps this has been and is necessary in order that the whole machinery of racial evolution may not be scrapped by the monkey wrench of the well-meaning teacher. But one cannot resist the temptation to think that it is possible with our growing knowledge of human modes of activity to facilitate and make more effective even the most fundamental and vital of our human adjustments. Otherwise one wonders what is the evolutionary function of intelligence. At least from this functional point of view, remembering that the word poetry stands for a type of activity and not for a product, we can readily give assent to Mackail's further words,

"It remains true still (in Gray's classic words) that poetry is the controller of sullen care and frantic passions; that it is the power which in later years dispels or solaces where it cannot dispel the ills of life—labor, penury, pain, disease, sorrow, death itself; that it is the inspiration from youth to age and in all times and lands, of the noblest human motives and ardours, of glory, of generous shame, of freedom and the unconquerable mind. . . . The great poets are the immortals in the fullest sense in which we may speak of anything human as exempt from the common law of mortality. The laws of poetry are the conditions of life. Poetry will become the nobler interpretation of an ampler life."

ART THE REVEALER*

By Ralph Adams Cram

(Ralph Adams Cram, architect and author, published sixteen volumes between 1901 and 1922, mostly about art—especially about architecture. *The Ministry of Art*, one of his most delightful books, is a collection of addresses and papers delivered before various colleges and clubs. This selection is included here because it suggests that art is a language—a language richer and more extended than mere words—carrying all the functional values which were assigned to language in Part II of this text. As this material is read, questions will naturally arise: In what sense is art an essential in education? By virtue of what characteristics is art valuable in building character? How may we cultivate our own personalities through the study of art. Such questions as these may have to await further reading for answer, but it is worth while to raise them.)

After what fashion shall I, follower of art in a sense, speak on this debatable subject . . . and here and now pay tribute to that great power whose duty it is to lead onward and forward every child born of man, until, man at last, he is worthy to play his part in the life that opens before him of service and charity and righteousness and worship?

I might speak of art historically, as the perfect flowering of sequent epochs of civilization, as the evanescent record of man's power of great achievement, as a glory of history in Homer and Pheidias, in Virgil and Anthemius of Tralles, in Ambrosian chant and Gregorian plain-song, in Arthurian legend and the Nibelungenlied, in Adam of St. Victor and Dante, in Cimabue and Giotto and their great successors, in the cathedrals and abbeys and mediævalism, in the sculptures of Pisa and Paris and Amiens, in Catholic ceremonial, in the glass of Chartres, the tapestries of Flanders, the metal-work

* Reprinted from *The Ministry of Art*, by Ralph Adams Cram, by permission of, and arrangement with, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1914.

of Spain, in the drama of Marlowe and Shakespeare, in the music of modern Germany, in the verse of the English Victorians. I might speak of art as an ornament and amenity of life, a splendid vesture covering the nakedness of society. I might speak of it in its economic aspect, or as the handmaid and exponent of religion.

Art is so great a thing, so inalienably a heritage and a natural right of man, it has all these aspects, and more; but for the moment I narrow myself to yet another consideration, —the function of art as an essential element in education.

The adjective may strike you strangely—"an essential element"—not an accessory, an extension; but I use it with intention, though to justify such use I must hasten to disavow any reference to the teaching of art as this now obtains either in art schools or under university faculties of fine arts. It is, I admit, hard to conceive such teaching as being of necessity an integral part of any scheme of general education,—however efficient it may be when viewed in the light of its own self-determined ends,—and I should expect, from no source, endorsement of any argument for the universal necessity of an art education conceived on similar lines; but I plead for a higher, or at least a broader, type of such teaching, because I try to place myself amongst those who set a higher estimate on art, conceiving it to be not an applied science or a branch of industrial training, or yet an extreme refinement of culture study, but simply an indispensable means toward the achievement of that which is the end and object of education, namely, the building of character.

There were days, and I think they were very bad old days, when it was held that education should take no cognizance whatever of character, of the making of sane, sound, honorable men and women, but only of mental training and mental discipline. Then it was said with grave assurance that it was not the province of public education to deal with religion,

ethics, or morals, except from a strictly historical and conscientiously non-sectarian standpoint, and that the place for the teaching of those things was the HOME—spelled with very large capitals. After a while the compulsion of events forced a readjustment of judgments, and we became conscious of the fact that a combination of influences—amongst them our very schools themselves—had resulted in the production of homes where neither religion nor ethics was taught at all, and where conscious character building was of the most superficial nature, while the concrete results were somewhat perilous to society. Struck at last by the fact that our most dangerous criminal classes were made up of those who were thoroughly well educated, we were compelled, as Walt Whitman says, "to reëxamine philosophies and religions," and some of us came to the conclusion that if the schools were to save the day—as they certainly must and certainly could—a new vision was necessary, and that what they were set to do was the bending of all their energies and powers toward character-building, toward the making, not of specialists, but of fine men and women, and good citizens.

Under the old system the significance of art and the part it could play in education were generally ignored; it was treated either as an "extra," as a special study like Egyptology and Anglo-Saxon, and so regarded as the somewhat effeminate affectation of the dilettante, or as a "vocational course," ranking so with mining engineering, dentistry, and business science. So taught, it was, indeed, no essential element in general education, but if we are right in our new view of the province thereof it may be that our old estimate of art and its function and its significance needs as drastic a revision, and that out of this may come a new method for the teaching of art.

What is it, then, this strange thing that has accompanied man's development through all history, always by his side, as faithful a servant and companion as the horse or the dog,

as inseparable from him as religion itself, this baffling potentiality that has left us authentic historical records where written history is silent, and where tradition darkens its guiding light? Is it simply a collection of crafts like hunting and husbandry, building and war? Is it a pastime, the industry of the idle, the amusement of the rich? None of these, I venture to assert, but rather the visible record of all that is noblest in man, the enduring proof of the divine nature that is the breath of his nostrils.

Henri Bergson says in speaking what he calls—inadequately, I think—intuition: "It glimmers wherever a vital instinct is at stake. On our personality, on our liberty, on the place we occupy in the whole of nature, on our origin, and perhaps also on our destiny it throws a light, feeble and vacillating, but which nevertheless pierces the darkness of the night in which the intellect leaves us." Here lies the province of art, where it has ever lain; for in all its manifestations, whether as architecture, painting, sculpture, drama, poetry, or ritual, it is the only visible and concrete expression of this mystical power in man which is greater than physical force, greater than physical mind, whether with M. Bergson we call it intuition or with the Christian philosophers we call it the immortal soul. . . .

Through art, then, we come into the revelation of the highest that man has achieved; not in conduct, not in mentality, not in his contest with the forces of nature, but in the things that rank even higher than these—in spiritual emancipation and an apprehension of the absolute, the unconditioned. The most perfect plexus of perfected arts the world has ever known was such a cathedral as Chartres, before the choir was defiled by the noxious horrors of the eighteenth century; when its gray walls were hung with storied tapestries, its dim vaults echoed to solemn Gregorians instead of operatic futilities, and the splendid and dramatic ceremonial of mediæval Catholicism made visible the poign-

ant religion of a Christian people. And in this amazing revelation of a consummate art, music was more than "a concord of sweet sounds," painting and sculpture more than the counterfeit presentment of defective nature, architecture more than ingenious masonry. Through these, and all the other assembled arts, radiated, like the coloured fires through the jewelled windows, awe, wonder, and worship, of men who had seen some faint adumbration of the Beatific Vision, and who called aloud to their fellows, in the universal language of art, the glad tidings of great joy that, by art, man might achieve, and through art he might reveal.

Now if art is, indeed, all this,—and proof lies clear in itself,—then its place in liberal education becomes manifest and its claims incontestable. If education is the education of all that is best in man, the making possible the realization of all his potentialities, the building up of personality through the dynamic force of the assembled achievements of the human race throughout history, and all toward the end of perfecting sane and righteous and honorable character, then must you make art, so understood and so taught, as integral a part of your curriculum as natural science, or mathematics, or biology. Not in dynastic mutations, not in the red records of war, not in economic vacillations, or in mechanical achievements, lies the revelation of man in his highest and noblest estate, but in those spiritual adventures, those strivings after the unattainable, those emancipations of the human soul from the hindrance of material form, which mark the highest points of his rise, presage his final victory, and are recorded and revealed in the art which is their voicing. . . .

Where is art taught in this sense and to this end? I confess I do not know. . . . I find names, dates, sequences of artists taught from textbooks, and sources and influences taught from fertile imaginations, together with erudite schemes and plots of authorship and attribution; but where shall we find the philosophy, the rationale of art, inculcated

as an elemental portion of the history of man and of his civilization?

Categories, always categories; and we confuse them to our own undoing. There have been historians who have compiled histories with no knowledge of art and with scant reference to its existence; there have been artists who have taught art with no knowledge of history and with some degree of contempt for its pretensions; yet the two are one, and neither—from an educational standpoint—is intelligible without the other. It is through Homer and Æschylus that we understand Hellas; through Aya Sophia that we understand Byzantium; through Gothic art that we know mediævalism; through St. Peter's and Guido Reni that the goal of the Renaissance is revealed to us. And so, on the other hand, what, for example, is the art of the Middle Ages if we know nothing of the burgeoning life that burst into this splendid flowering? What are the cathedral builders to us, and the myriad artists allied with them, when severed from monasticism, the Catholic revival, the crusades, feudalism, the guilds and communes, the sacramental philosophy of Hugh of St. Victor, and the scholastic philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas? We build our little categorical box-stalls and herd history in one, art in another, religion in a third, philosophy in a fourth, and so on, until we have built a labyrinth of little cells, hermetically sealed and securely insulated, and then we wonder that our own civilization is of the same sort, and that over us hangs the threat of an ultimate bursting forth of imprisoned and antagonistic forces, with chaos and anarchy as the predicted end. . . .

No longer is it possible for us to sever being into its component parts and look for life in each moiety; for us, and for our successors, the building-up of a new synthesis, the new vision of life as a whole, where no more are we interested in isolating religion, politics, education, industry, art, like so many curious fever germs, but where once more we

realize that the potency of each lies, not in its own distinctive characteristics, but in the interplay of all.

And with this vision we return to the consciousness that all great art is a light to lighten the darkness of mere activity, that at the same time it achieves and reveals. So, as art shows forth man's transfiguration, does it also serve as a gloss on his actions, revealing that which was hid, illuminating that which was obscure. . . .

"Man is the measure of all things," said Protagoras, and with equal truth we can say: Art is the measure of man.

THE INTERPRETATION OF HUMAN LIFE IN ART*

By Edward Howard Griggs

(Perhaps there has never been a time when a tenable philosophy of art was more needed and more lacking than the present, both among writers and among readers. As teacher and lecturer and writer, Edward Howard Griggs has sought to lend beauty and sincerity to life by founding its values upon a reasoned philosophy. *The Philosophy of Art*, from which this extract is taken, discusses, with a wealth of illustrative material, "the meaning and relations of sculpture, painting, poetry, and music." Some of the questions about art raised in the reading of the article from Cram will find answer here. Perhaps the student may not be familiar with some of the books and plays mentioned, but he can easily understand that art can never be an exact copy of nature, that it must interpret some significant phase of human life. Here will be found an adequate basis for evaluating the realistic art of the period which seems to be closing.)

Art is always, as we have seen, an expression of some aspect of life; but this expression is inevitably at the same time *interpretation*. Art never merely echoes nature; it gives na-

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ture *as the artist sees it*, thus putting it through the transmuting spectrum of the artist's personality. This is true even of semi-mechanical imitation of nature, as in amateur photography. Suppose you wish to take for a friend a photograph of a little wooded glen that seems to you particularly beautiful: What do you do: set up your camera and take the view? Not at all; you wait for the hour "when the light is right"; go about from one point of view to another until you find the one that best pleases you; and then take your picture. That is, of the almost innumerable views you might have taken, you choose this one, and in so doing say what this bit of nature means to you. Thus, even when copying with a mechanical instrument, through selecting the particular aspect and point of view, you interpret the phase of the objective world in terms of its relation to your own spirit.

So with the most realistic of novels: the artist must select his material from the bewildering detail of life, and choose his point of view in portraying it, thus interpreting the life he copies. Suppose one were to attempt a realistic narration of one's own life; of what would one write? Why, everything, of course. Yes, and fill a library with the record of a month. It would be impossible to write out the life of one week, with no selection, recording every incident, every thought, every influence. That is not what is meant, of course, but the recording only of what is important. Ah, but who shall say what is important? Is it not evident that the most realistic narration of a week's life would bring certain facts strongly into the foreground, since they would seem most essential to the narrator; other facts, appearing to him as less significant, would be subordinated in the background; while a multitude of other facts would be suppressed altogether, since they would seem to have no value, and in many instances might not even be recalled? Yet of the facts so suppressed or forgotten might not one easily be the critical

element of the life seen from God's point of view in the perspective of the whole? Thus the most realistic narrator chooses his point of view, exercises a high degree of selection upon his material, and thus interprets life in terms of his own personality, in copying or recording it. The pity of the worse type of realistic novel is that it selects its material from moral disease instead of health, as if disease were truer than health! That notion is one of the strange anomalies of our time. Men exclaim: "We will see life"; and then proceed to smear themselves with the slime of its disease! The truth is, disease can never be understood aright except from the point of view of the health of which it is the perversion. Still, even in the wrong kind of realism, dedicated to the exploitation of moral disease, art selects and arranges its material, treats it from a specific point of view, and thus interprets in attempting to copy.

Art is thus always, at the same time, real and ideal. It is real, for it must grip reality somewhere to be art; it is ideal, for it never merely copies reality. The great artists have always been aware of this, consciously or instinctively; and it is noteworthy that the controversy concerning realism and idealism in art has been carried on, not chiefly by creative artists, but by critics and theorists on the outside.

Selection of material and point of view is, however, only the initial principle of idealism. In all art is, further, the tendency to lift nature to more adequate expression. Perhaps I can best illustrate this second principle by giving my own experience with Shakespeare. It had long puzzled me that Shakespeare is called the great realist, loyally holding the mirror up to human nature; yet all his characters speak beautiful poetry. Even Caliban upon his island talks of the "quick freshies" and the "bigger light and less" in language exquisitely poetical. For a time it seemed the explanation must be that actual men and women do not express them-

selves ordinarily in beautiful poetry; art must be beautiful, hence the discrepancy. The explanation did not satisfy, however. Then I began to see that, while all Shakespeare's characters speak poetry, no two of them speak alike. Caliban does not speak as Miranda, nor Miranda like Prospero. Hamlet and Horatio are as different in expression as in character. Then I saw that what Shakespeare had done was to lift each character to a plane of adequate expression, causing each to speak not as the person does speak in life, but as, in the given situation actual men and women would speak if they could say just what they meant and say it perfectly. Take the supreme example: no Roman lion brought to bay, squandering half the world for a great passion, ever used the wealth of overwhelming imagery and vocabulary that comes from the lips of Shakespeare's Mark Antony; and no sensuous queen of Egypt, daughter of a hundred Ptolemies, fitting lioness mate for this Roman lion, ever spoke with the audacious sweep of language and imagery that comes from Cleopatra in the play; yet Shakespeare's Antony and Cleopatra speak just what those two characters, in the given circumstances of their lives, would have spoken, could they have said exactly what they felt and said it perfectly.

So it is with the artistic expression of deep meditation. Let one walk in the countryside some quiet autumn afternoon, when the winds are still and the leaves quietly falling, red and brown, from the boughs of the trees, the sky gray and still above; let one be alone or with one friend who understands and knows when not to speak; the breath comes slowly and regularly, and so does the heart beat. One moves with slow and measured step. In such a mood one does not usually speak in poetry; but if it were possible to express perfectly what one thinks and feels in such a mood, one would speak in just such measured, slow-moving, musical lines as those in the greatest of Wordsworth's sonnets:

"The world is too much with us; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers:
Little we see in Nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!
The Sea that bares her bosom to the moon;
The winds that will be howling at all hours,
And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers;
For this, for everything, we are out of tune;
It moves us not.—Great God! I'd rather be
A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn;
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathed horn."

This element of idealism is present in all the arts. Where in the French nature world can you find Corot's landscapes? Well, *everywhere*, and here, too, *after* you have seen and loved them in Corot's paintings; but nowhere before. It is almost as if that French nature world had been brooding for untold centuries, waiting to voice the meaning of its beauty; but only when Corot came and grasped its secret could it rise to full and free expression. So the dumb, half-wakened hunger of the French peasant, on the background of majestic nature, waited for the genius of Millet to understand it and express it in art. Thus the *Venus de Milo* bodies forth, not what any Greek woman was, but what all Greek women wanted to be, womanhood achieving its highest expression, not in nature, but in the interpretation of art.

Even more fully is this element of idealism present in music, the art capable of voicing emotions that lie far too deep for words ever to express them. As we shall see in our study of music, its peculiar method and function bring this phase of idealism to its highest form.

This element in all the arts is balanced by a third principle

of idealism—the *law of restraint*. This demands that the artist shall not express *all* he feels: he must express a part and suggest the rest, stimulating the imagination to go on beyond the limits of what is given. If an actor, for example, were to express all the passion of Lear or Othello, you would say he ranted, and the verdict would be just. Were music to embody all the composer feels, it would fail to move deeply. If a speaker expresses all he has to give, the effect is cheap. Behind what is given, must be a great reserve power unexpressed.

Thus when art attempts to do everything for its audience the effect is tawdry. That is one trouble with the theater to-day. The effort by skilful scene painting and other sensational effects to accomplish everything for the jaded senses and sluggish imagination of the spectator, tends to make him sit back in a semi-somnolent fashion merely to be played upon from without; while the challenge to the actor is almost equally wanting. The result is that, with no active coöperation between artist and audience, the characters fail to impress themselves. Better the bare, unadorned stage of Shakespeare's time, with a signboard to indicate Rome or London, where the situation challenged the actor to the vigorous effort to interpret life, than, in the attempt to accomplish everything for the senses and imagination, to fail wholly of the vital portrayal of character.

The principle is thus universal. The landscape artist dare not paint all he sees, but must creatively interpret his vision instead of imitating nature. In music it is the deep wealth of emotion unexpressed that gives to the melody its power to sweep one on to the bosom of the sea of feeling.

With all art that portrays life in relation to law there is a further element of idealism in carrying the laws to greater fulfillment than appears normally in life. Literature especially does this. In our life, tendencies are evident, but incomplete. The threads are spun a little way and then pitiless

Atropos cuts them off, and how those tangled threads may be woven into the complete garment of life behind the veil, we cannot see; but the true artist sees. Indeed, he is artist partly because he is prophet, with a vision of life brought full circle. In life, the curtain may fall on any one of the scenes of the never-finished drama; in the play, it may not fall until the five full acts are complete. In life, any one who is growing dies too soon: there are always incomplete tendencies, potentialities broken off; but in art, the ethical motive, laid down in the beginning, must be completed in the end. In our world, not all mad ambition brings the tragedy of *Macbeth*, not all unfounded jealousy the pitiful eclipse at the end of *Othello*, not all introspective absorption, with the will balanced between opposing motives, the black disaster of *Hamlet*; but in Shakespeare these conclusions inexorably follow. Thus art interprets life by bringing its actual tendencies of good and evil to that more complete fufillment toward which religion and philosophy have always groped.

Further, in all the arts is an element of idealism which may be called *atmosphere*. It is this that unifies a masterpiece and gives the key to the spirit of the whole. Nowhere is there a better illustration than in the paintings of Titian. What is it that makes his pictures so wonderful an interpretation of Venice? Not the nude figures, the bit of mountain, the sea or the radiant sky; but the luxuriant wealth of warm golden light poured over the whole, transfiguring the landscape, lifting the nude bodies away from all possible association with illness or death, giving unity and interpreting the whole.

So the subtle "light that never was on sea or land" is more than anything else the key to Corot's impression. In the *Inferno* of Dante there is one dominant atmosphere, made of darkness deepened into darkness, set off by vermilion flame; in the *Purgatorio* another, made up of all the beauty of the

natural world; in the *Paradiso* a third, with light multiplied into light, till the radiant shining is all but unendurable. Similarly there is one unifying and interpretative atmosphere in a fugue of Bach's, a nocturne of Chopin's, or in the third movement of the *Ninth Symphony* of Beethoven.

Besides these five elements of idealism in art, there is a final principle, in that art, to be sound, must present the phase of life it portrays in true relation to the whole. This applies particularly to the portrayal of evil. This is dangerous in its effect only when evil is pictured out of relation to the whole of life, as for instance, in the worse sort of the so-called French novel (which is not produced, by the way, exclusively in France) where a moral evil is dressed in such beautiful garments that it is mistaken for the good, and so becomes seductively misleading. The great masters never make this mistake: in their portrayal evil is as repulsive in form as it is offensive in meaning. No daughter was ever led to unfilial conduct by the example of Goneril and Regan in *King Lear*; no one was ever tempted to a career of deception by the example of Iago. We despise these characters, and they in no way seduce us to imitation of their behavior.

Thus Dante uses coarse epithets and imagery increasingly painful to the senses, to clothe the darker sins as he descends the pit of hell. That the principle is not confined to moral evil, however, is evident in the work of such painters as Millet and Bastien-Lepage, the wonder of whose portrayal of peasant life is that the phase studied is given in such sound relation to the whole of life as to interpret its very soul.

Let me give an illustration of this principle in the field of the novel. Some years ago Upton Sinclair studied the notorious packing-house district of Chicago and portrayed its horrors in the novel, *The Jungle*, widely read here and abroad, which helped vitally to the reform of the evil conditions it exploited. Now I have no doubt that every incident given in the novel could be paralleled in the packing-house district

of Chicago, and that the mass of these facts had come under the direct observation of the author; yet I have no hesitation in saying that the story as a whole is *untrue* to the life it presents. What the author did, after exhaustive investigation of the horrors of that district of Chicago, was to gather them all together and heap them upon the head of one devoted woman and family. The result was a more or less effective reform document, but a novel with a loss of sound perspective, thus artistically, and hence ethically, untrue to the life it portrayed. The same criticism may be passed upon a more recent social document, exploiting the evils of the "white slave traffic"—Kauffman's *House of Bondage.*

It is on the basis of this principle, little as it is understood, that the work of Ibsen, Maeterlinck, Shaw, Wilde and Sudermann must ultimately be judged, as also the didactic dramas, such as *The Passing of the Third Floor Back, The Servant in the House, Everywoman, The Terrible Meek*, which have enjoyed such vogue recently. Much second-rate work, that is widely popular for the moment, is weeded out and forgotten after a little time, just because the artist lacked the greatness to see the part in true perspective and sound relation to the whole, and so became the partisan rather than the true creator.

Let us sum up our work to this point, formulating the answer to our first question: *Art is then the adequate and harmonious expression and interpretation, through the medium of personality and in definitely limited form, of some phase of man's life or relation to nature in true relation to the whole.* This statement is not intended as a definition in the ordinary sense, but as a thesis, gathering together all the elements studied as forming art. Simplifying the statement, retaining the most definitive elements: *Art is the adequate and harmonious expression and interpretation of some phase of man's life in true relation to the whole.*

WHAT IS ART?*

By Oskar Pfister

(Oskar Pfister, pastor at Zürich and Seminar-Lecturer, is the author of *The Psycho-analytical Method, Expressionism in Art,* etc. A few of the technical terms in this article may prove to be difficult. Some students may not be able to follow the more mystical parts of the philosophy. But all readers can understand the contention of the author that art is not a mere ornament on the surface of life, but a universal way in which man organizes his experiences so that they may prove to be more satisfactory. This function and method of art is, in part, an answer to the questions about its nature raised while reading the extracts from Cram.)

It is an absolute impossibility to indicate by means of mere psychology what constitutes the essence of true art. On the contrary rather should one consider carefully the individual's position in the world and the relation of the individual life-function to the totality of the life-process, in order to be able to arrive at a right estimate of art.

All art originates in the failure of Reality to satisfy man's needs. Richard Wagner has confessed that there would be no necessity for any art if we possessed Life in all its fullness. "I cannot understand," he said, "how it ever occurs to a perfectly happy man to take up art at all." All art therefore is a poverty-certificate given to our life. But it is also a proof of the wealth inherent in Man's mind.

The most sensible method to re-act on life's woes is to overcome them by removing their causes. This is the realistic solution of the conflict; and it leads finally towards Science and kindred pursuits. But this solution is not always possible since the resistance of Reality proves itself to be too great for the individual man's strength. Another route is

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therefore taken by anticipating within the realms of fancy the release from life's woes. . . .

Art, too, belongs to these attempts to create a balance to the unsatisfactory world of Reality, life in which becomes unbearable. Art substitutes for this deficient loathsome world—a world of fancy; and within this creation of art of course all that poverty of life has been overcome, and in its stead are to be found great Values. Thus art is called into life by the need of deliverance, and the aim of art is—release. In so far art is in accordance with dream-fancies and illusory ideas.

There is, however, a fundamental difference between art and her humbler sisters. The very starting point is different. The artist's sufferings are not caused by the trifles of every-day life. His inspiration springs always from some great sorrow. The really great sorrows, however, are those which fall to the share of all mankind, or at any rate, are shared by the majority. Perhaps he feels (like Prometheus) the chains of his own existence, or the lovelessness of it; perhaps he writhes under the feeling that no one understands him; perhaps he grieves over the insignificance, the poverty, the imperfection, sin and guiltiness of life. Every great artist is, if not exactly a lamb of God that carries the world's sins, at any rate a central-monad which beholds in its own sufferings all the woes of mankind. It is therefore some real deep-seated Sorrow, caused by the general imperfection of our race and by the very nature of Reality; not some trifling grievance, the result of individual stupidity or inferiority, and magnified enormously by constant lamentation. The dreaming child can elaborate in those dreams of his the desire for strawberries (Freud, Traumdeutung II p. 94). The fool can set up an outcry about the mess into which he has landed himself. The artist, however, even though he feels his own sufferings intensely, highly-strung as he is, yet connects them at once with the sufferings of

mankind as a whole, he looks upon his own as a fraction of man's sufferings. Thus his sufferings assume for him the character of the woes of mankind. The artist is the sensorium of mankind. . . .

Art, in its sublime meaning, comprises those representations of reality in which the intellect gives expression to such a harmonious overcoming of all present imperfections and deficiencies in life, as to indicate thus the ideal life-forces without thereby expressing any desire actually to eliminate the factor of suffering in life.

From this definition it follows that Art can never be merely descriptive. It must add something which in the world of reality either does not exist at all or insufficiently. Further, it must reveal something that is hidden from ordinary mortals. The artist is always a seer who perceives what is hidden from profane eyes. He penetrates into the innermost of things and recognizes remedial powers, ideal forces indicating new direction, which ordinary mortals do not see.

And these higher forces and values are not invented but discovered, and discovered after the passionate struggle and earnest search without which no one can become an artist. Herein lies the very quintessence of true art. The impressionist never gets below the surface of things, and passing off the surface as the thing itself he falsifies reality and life in a clumsy and short-sighted fashion. The artist, however, experiences within himself the eternal laws and necessities. All true art possesses deep insight, the insight that penetrates the abysmal depths. And since in all art there lies the symbolic overcoming of the sufferings of Reality with a view to a transfiguration of the world, no true artist can be a pure artist and renounce the representation of reality. . . .

Just because a true man can work out to the full his predetermined life-purpose only within Reality, because only as a living being who elaborates Reality with ideal forces

can he prove his humanity, thus Art too must aim at Reality. Art is to depict the whole of Reality but also the forces of deliverance lying within the latter. Art may acknowledge needs and defects and be a mirror for the misery of the world, yea she must do so, else she is not true art and has no power to influence men. But never should she fail to show the overcoming of evil, the conquest of misery and guilt. If the work remains fixed in hopeless woe, then an indispensable characteristic of art is lacking. If art represents a world without suffering the result is an untrue, unsatisfactory, fulsome-cliché. If the deliverance and transfiguration is brought about by means and ways alien to Reality, an ideal play of fancy results which has no life-furthering power to bestow on any one. Even fairy-tales, if they are to impress us, must be true, must conceal highest realities beneath a symbolic garment. The fairy-tale of the Seven Ravens, e.g., sends such a thrill through the reader only because this story represents symbolically Love's power of deliverance. The soul of a work of art must always be some truth, for only truth delivers us.

The will towards Deliverance has as its results that all art must be prospective. It strives after a better world. But also in this respect it must be true. And art is true if it does not offer idle dreams but a way out of the narrowness of life towards a development of the highest life-energies, the noblest feelings, a way out that corresponds to the forces of reality, to the actual purpose of all existence.

This deliverance is, however, one only anticipated in imagination. And, too, even this concept contains the idea of deliverance but symbolically. But since the solution corresponds to human nature as it is, to human needs and possibilities, since this solution has grasped the true essence of things, the observer's Unconsciousness responds gratefully, exultantly to the artist's Unconscious, prophesying in the picture.

We will not despise the art of less able men, which elaborates incidental and external defects of life, and which does not open out any great, ideal perspectives of deliverance. But we must stipulate that Truth and Love, general applicability of the imagination-product to real life, indication of the delivering forces of Reality should of necessity be presented.

Thus art at its best is at the same time the most personal matter—for the artist's whole personality to its innermost depth has been called into activity; and while an eminently social performance, it is an ethical and metaphysical confession. It always comprises highest subjectivity and objectivity, reality and ideality. It is a cult, yea a fervent prayer, a kneeling before the divine powers which, like a hidden stream, well up in the depths of existence; a defiant declaration of war on all earthiness and all half-souls; a reckless laughter at their miserable appearance. And yet despite all the certainty of victory there remains spread over all Reality the veil of mystery and no artist should shoulder the guilt of Gyges. Art always remains under the spell of the symbol with its plain easy lucidity and its inexhaustible treasures. And art will always be a matter of intuition that is strong on its affective side; only on the wings of fancy can the artist be borne across the awful abyss between life's misery and World-perfection. Thus every art leads up Mount Nebo and shows the promised Land; but only the Individual Pioneer can start on the dangerous and wearisome way to the Jordan.

Every artist is a prophet who overcomes this world's misery through his insight into the deepest, highest, safest Reality through his power of giving formative expression amidst the chaos of human life to God's ideas of salvation. May everyone upon whom such artistic gifts have been bestowed always remember his priestly duty! . . .

If art was also aiming at nothing but a fuller life, art would have to reveal life-tendencies entitled to claim superiority over disturbing life-tendencies. And thereby it becomes evident that this greatest mind-vitality is not intensified by mystic contemplation . . . but by an attitude of practical Activity which—based on a strong will, on the joy of work and aided by a great love, by an unshakeable belief in a sense of life, in the existence of ideal forces—will endeavour to overcome the woes of Reality and to realize the higher purpose innate in the cosmic process. The secret of life, of liberty, of peace, consists in the devotion of the individual soul to the Cosmic soul; but this devotion is effective only in a trustful and unrestrained activity for the permeation of Reality and of the infinite mind with the mind Infinite.

Art ought to correspond with such an aim. If it were true, as Worringer states (Wilhelm Worringer, *Abstraktion und Einfühlung*, 5th edition, München 1918, p. 175) that all our definitions of art consider the latter "as a luxury-activity of the Psyche thus disposing of its surplus vitality," these miserable and philistine definitions have to be cleared away. No, we do not look on art with the eyes of the money-proud Parvenues who hardly know how to spend their superfluous millions. We know too much of life's misery and men's poverty, of gigantic tasks that lie before civilization, of social distress clamouring for help, of the heart's longing for absolute values, of man's endless desire for deliverance from guilt and foolishness; we know too much of man's endless limitations in this finite world: to allow ourselves luxuries, to throw boastingly away superfluous strength! Above all it is the duty of the present generation—as of all generations—to remind itself of the noble aims of life, of the great powers of life; our generation must find itself, find its own soul, and conquer the gross materialism in all classes of modern society.

And to do that our generation needs, in addition to other things—art.

THE CREATIVE DREAM*

By John G. Neihardt

(There has been, of late years, growing interest in the stories of the last stand of the Indians against the encroachments of the white man in Montana and Wyoming. John G. Neihardt lived for a number of years among the Indians, studying their manners and their history, and he has used his materials in many stories in prose and in verse. Among his well known volumes are *The Song of Hugh Glass*, 1915; *The Song of Three Friends*, given the prize as the best volume of verse by the Poetry Society of America, 1919; *The Song of the Indian Wars*, 1925; and *Poetic Values*, 1925. By act of legislature in 1921, Mr. Neihardt was made poet laureate of Nebraska.)

An artist, we may say, is one whose habit it is to view the world from the vantage point of states more or less removed from the standardized state of ordinary living, and who has a special technique for representing the wider experience by fusion with the narrower, to the end that his vision may be shared.

To make a crude picture of the idea, we may fancy the great mass of men as living in a valley entirely surrounded by lofty mountains. Being so long forced to act as though there were nothing beyond the mountains, most men have come to believe that nothing is real outside the valley. This is their genuine belief, the one upon which they act. Their religion teaches them that there is a wonderful world beyond the mountains, and that those people who are consistently good in the traditional sense of the valley will die into that wider world. But meanwhile the mountains appear to be impassable, and no one altogether "in his senses"

* Reprinted by permission from *Poetic Values*, by John G. Neihardt, published by The Macmillan Company, 1925.

strives to climb them. Indeed it would be considered impious to try, as though one should dare to peep before his time upon the secret doings of divinity. But as far back as valley records reach, and far beyond, no doubt, there have been variations of the valley type. Some of these are not sound sleepers, as practical and thoroughly "successful" valley men should be. We may say, by way of making our picture clearer, that some of these variant types become notorious sleepwalkers, and in ways unknown, perhaps, to themselves, manage to ascend the steeps about the valley while other men are deep in slumber. No one sees them come and no one sees them go, for it is a distinguishing characteristic of valley people to sleep a heavy sleep. And when the somnambulist himself undertakes to tell what he has seen below him under the stars and moon, he himself may not know it from the stuff of dreams. But men listen willingly, for there is a novel, entertaining quality, and something mysteriously more, in what these men may undertake to tell. One of them may have viewed the valley from only a moderate height; but even from that vantage point the aspect of familiar things has changed, and new relations are perceived—relations that throw a strange light upon one's thought about one's neighbor, perhaps. Another may have ascended still farther, and from that high viewpoint other changes in the aspect of familiar things are to be recorded, for there the whole valley is seen at a glance, and things once big, grow little, and many things are merged, and much that once seemed to matter, doesn't matter. And now and then it seems that one may have stood upon a swimming peak and beheld the valley as a tiny pool of shadow in a vast of starlight, as though he had peered a moment upon an outer world—but this we are not yet permitted to believe.

Now each of these finds trouble in the telling of what men call his dream; for language has been developed to

meet the need of those who have never left the valley, and there are no words for aspects of the valley from the height. Accordingly, through the ages, these sleepwalkers have developed new languages, new techniques, whereby it may be possible to re-create in the minds of valley men some semblance of the vision of the height; and this cannot be done at all unless something of the original mood of the seeing can somehow be produced. Curious strategic devices are employed—devices fashioned for the ear and eye, since, as Jane Harrison has observed in *Ancient Art and Ritual*, there are the organs of the "distant senses." Some strive with color, some with visual form, and some strive to present the mood of the vision by weaving sounds into enchanting patterns. And some use the words in ways unknown to common valley parlance, creating a rhythmic flow of pictures in the mind of him who hears; and this way is more suggestion than telling, more singing than speech; and were it all a telling, less would be told.

All this is the technique of the arts; and always the effect of the message thus delivered is to set the general above the particular, to emphasize the larger relations, to merge the heedful self in the whole. And at this point it is important to note how Art blends, by imperceptible degrees, into Ethics; while in the realm of its origin it is obviously one process with essential Religion. Some men, in that regard, are very old-fashioned still—men who cannot associate religion with a particular cosmogony, a particular system of rewards and punishments, and a particular ritual, but rather with a passionate desire to understand larger and larger relations, and, so far as these may be ascertained, to be lost in them. And is not every religious dogma an art form originally intended to function as the medium of this same passionate desire for loss of self in the great process of which we are a part? The sonnet form may be an excellent vehicle for the expression of poetic vision; but if one should

come to insist that poetry is a matter of fourteen lines of a given metric pattern arranged in accordance with a stipulated rhyme scheme, one might lose the poetry altogether and come to hate his neighbor for perversely favoring the quatrain. But the artistically pious, as we may say, will insist only that the form used shall be an adequate medium of the poetry, which is the sole justification of the form.

We must note that the picture of the hemmed-in valley with its many sound sleepers and its few somnambulists is accurate enough to convey the desired impression that the standardized vision of the world is not the only possible one, and that visions of the world from expanded fields of attention may be none the less true visions of the world. But our valley picture is, nevertheless, inadequate in one particular; for it had to be based upon the assumption of a sharp line of division drawn between the artist and the valley dwellers. No such sharp line exists, though once a certain penumbra of difference is passed, the division seems sharp enough. There is a great deal in the findings of modern psychology to show that the consciousness of any man extends well beyond that focus which most men deem the only valid one. It is as though one's field of consciousness were a vast sensitive area, reaching how far no one knows; and over this area, to a greater or less degree, shifts the realizing focus of the self. Even the most matter-of-fact man must have experienced this shifting of the focus; and there must have come to him, as a result, moments of swift insight. But if he gives these moments any thought at all, it is generally only to remark to himself how "queer" they were. But probably very few people are as sense-bound as they seem to others or deem themselves to be; and very many, without any knowledge of the process, must live, to some extent, the life of the artist, action being the only form of expression they know. In our sense, then, there is profound meaning in the saying that

Man is the artist animal; and in proportion as he utilizes in the standard animal realm the values to be perceived only by the characteristic process of art is he raised, in the qualitative sense, above the status of the brute. How then may we describe the dogmatic materialist? May we not say that he is one who assumes that the only way to solve our human problems is by intensifying the focus of light where it impinges on the standardized area of essentially animal experience? Given a microscope of steadily increasing magnifying power, a man might spend a lifetime in the study of a single square foot of sod in his front yard; and it might seem to the man that the square foot of earth was expanding, so long as he kept his eye glued to the microscope, noting the increasing complexity of phenomena; but he would learn nothing of the round earth. Without discrediting the great value of the man's microscopic discoveries, other men, who, perchance, had done a bit of roving in their day, might reasonably insist upon the co-ordinate values of geography. It is only in detail and not in meaning that this illustration is exaggerated.

Returning to what we have agreed to call the creative dream, we can best get at the mechanism of the process involved by limiting our attention to the literary form called poetry, because it is the one of the four arts chosen that utilizes language. Whatever is true of the process in this form of art will apply in general to the other arts; for the nature of the process involved is identical in all, the technique alone being changed in keeping with the medium employed.

We may assume that all the materials utilized by the poet are found in the standardized world, though one who is familiar with the greatest poetry may sometimes be persuaded to think otherwise. It is best for our purpose to assume that all the original material of poetry is of the common-sense world, since this gives us a much needed contact with extremely practical people; and it will be seen that our case is

in no way damaged by the assumption. This material may be almost anything of which the average man in his so-called normal state may be aware.

So long as what we have termed the realizing focus of the poet's self remains fixed, nothing is to be noted by him but the usual factual regard of things familiar. But, suddenly, the light spreads about the object of regard, and in proportion as it spreads, areas of hitherto hidden meaning are illumined as in a dream; relations normally concealed are suspected or revealed as in a vision. It is in this swift and ecstatic widening of conscious regard that the substance of the poem is conceived, and the substance of it is concerned with the larger relations that are revealed. It is as though one were walking in a cloudy night with a lantern, the glow of which is turned upon a single tree; and the tree is all that is seen. Suddenly, an inundation of sheet lightning reveals the landscape of which the tree was all the while an integral part. It is a thrilling vision, and how shall it be told to men who, for our purpose, may be conceived as knowing their world only as a lantern may reveal it? We know of course that men do not live wholly by our figurative lantern light. They only persuade themselves to believe that they do; and the effect of this persuasion upon the world is what we see.

As we have noted, it has been shown by experience that a man's field of consciousness extends beyond that spot to which his attention is normally fixed. Myers called this outer field "the subliminal or ultra-marginal consciousness," and it was his purpose to support by experiment his belief, shared as an "over-belief" by James among many others, that this subliminal may be identical with the surviving ego, the soul. We are not concerned with that conception; not that we reject it, but that we want to justify our poetic values with the least possible strain on the credulity of prejudiced common sense. Von Hartman used the term "the Unconscious,"

but he was concerned with the construction of a cosmic philosophy and he needed an absolute for his purpose; while we are keeping as close as possible to the familiar coast line of the little island where we must live and work with each other. We know that we are in a rowboat, and that it is for master mariners to sail tall ships by the dim star. What we mean by the outer field is what Myers meant, just short of the point where he reached out into the cosmos for possible spiritual relations that need not concern us.

It has been shown that this outer field is fundamental and primitive; that its characteristic processes are concerned, not with words, but with images; not with logic, but with analogies, images being linked together in chains of meaning by virtue of likeness, and the images in the farther reaches of the field tend to be generic. Ellis has dealt with this phase of the problem in his *World of Dreams*, and many other investigators have reached the same conclusion. Furthermore, the sense of time and space, as we have it in waking life, drops away in the further reaches. In a dream, time and space are nothing. Any good student has experienced this in moments of intense concentration. No one can do creative thinking and escape the experience.

The poet then, through some shifting of spontaneous attention, may suddenly conceive a given human experience as regarded from the vantage point of the wider field. His new viewpoint may be only slightly removed from the usual viewpoint of common sense, so that the difference between the two views may seem no more than a restatement in a winsome manner, as in the poetry of James Whitcomb Riley; or the difference may be so great as to demand special development on the part of the recipient of the poet's message, as in much of Shelley's work. In either case the poet will find the literal meanings of words, as given in the dictionary, inadequate for his representation of the new view, since language was developed out of the needs of the waking field,

except as the poetic process has touched some of them with meaning that is beyond definition. The new vision cannot be stated merely, for this reason; a sense of it must somehow be induced, and the method will be that which is characteristic of the outer field. Likenesses of both sight and sound will be invoked; the specific, which is transient, will tend to merge in the general and abiding; and the farther the new viewpoint is removed from the habitual one, the more pronounced will this tendency become in the expression of the vision. In poetry like that of Riley, the new viewpoint is so near to the habitual one that the likenesses employed may all be within the everyday experience of the average individual. In the poetry of the major poets, the distance may be so great at times that the likenesses employed must be taken from the widest human experience, that of the race, thus becoming unintelligible to those who have only personal experience upon which to draw for understanding. And race-experience, in this sense, will be far more than historical fact. It will be a matter of great moods that have dominated the minds of men, and such moods in turn can be grasped only through other poetic processes; so that certain portions of a major poet's product may reach back for meaning through a poetic succession the beginning of which is lost in antiquity.

Thus we may say that minor poetry is produced in the edge of the outer field, so near to the standard spot that the sense of time and space is still strong, tending to limit expression to the moment and the place. The ultimate practical values of such poetry will partake of the conventional; and later generations, wrapped up in the conventions of their own times and places, may be little moved by poems that thrilled millions in their time. On the other hand, major poetry is produced in the further reaches of the outer field, so distant from the standard spot that the sense of space and time is weakened, or even lost by fits; the moment and the

place grow vague, as remembered in a dream, or vanish as memories of the day in the strangely conscious profundity of sleep. The symbols of expression become generic, the fundamentally human is emphasized, the sense of individuality weakens or dies out, the universal is substituted for the particular; for here the poetic process is taking place in human depths

That yield no foam to any squall of change.

The ultimate values of such poetry may seem to the unlettered reader little related to his conventional moral code; but the ethical principles involved will be found to be those of which all moral codes are but momentary approximations.

Anyone who truly loves poetry has noted that a great line or passage seems old. Holmes' Autocrat remarked this fact, saying in substance that whenever he wrote a good line it seemed not to be his own. That which, in its origin, was unassociated with time cannot but seem old when the time sense is applied to it. For time is a conventional measure of change, which in turn is a matter of unstable relations; therefore the larger relationing of the poetic process would tend to give an impression of permanence, just as distant hills, seen in their larger relations from a rapidly moving train, seem fixed, while the foreground flows away. It is because human life is vexed with ceaseless change that the relative stabilities of art are precious to us; and those relative stabilities are not illusory, for even in change there are principles that endure, and there is an essential humanness that, at least for our brief planetary life, is constant. We cannot live humanly without an abiding sense of such constancies; and it is by virtue of what we have called the creative dream that these may be vividly realized. Judged by the little relations of strictly common-sense living, we all go down to defeat at the last; for the desire to get something is the pitiful obsession of sense-bound men. It is a characteristic

animal obsession. But we never get anything, as the nearest undertaker will testify. We give everything, whether we will or not—and every life, viewed from the standpoint of the narrow world of sense, is a pathetic affair. All the hustle and the hope and the worry and the disappointment and the loss and the suffering—and then what? How can it be justified in terms of the local and the individual and the momentary? What but the vision that is of art can reveal the impersonal victory that is wrought of all these numberless little individual defeats? Yet shrewd men are prone to regard the values of art as impractical in the literal sense. Art, we are told—and even many artists agree—is an imaginative means of escape from reality.

Poetry is a means of communication between the stable and universal background of human personality and the flowing foreground of the individual. The act of creating a poem —or any work of art—is an act of translating; and if pure poetry could be created, it would not be literature; it would be music; just as pure music could be conceived only as enchanted silence. The value of a poem is in proportion to the largeness of the mood that it is capable of creating in the properly sensitive recipient. The major inspiration of the poet is concerned with the conception of that mood and not with details of mechanism in the translation of the mood. This explains why it is possible to give intensive technical study to poetry without experiencing that profound change which it is the function of art to produce. The conception of the poem, even though it be long, may be a matter of seconds or minutes by the clock; but the mutterings of clocks are without significance in those deeps where poetry may be conceived; and just as a sleeper may experience an extended dream adventure in the moment of waking, so may the poet conceive in a flash of the wider regard a poem that only the labor of years can translate in terms of sense. And when this has happened to him, significantly enough, he will

feel gloriously safe in the cosmos, and his petty self, with its innumerable hurts and fears and desires, will be lost in an overwhelming sense of love for all things and all men—so long as the revealing moment remains vivid. If this mood could last, he might be what men call a saint; his life would be the only expression of his vision, and few men in any generation would be able to interpret it, for the man would be living wholly with reference to the wider awareness. And he might not live long for obvious reasons. Nearly two thousand years ago there was a supreme artist whose life, lived creatively in accordance with a super-brutal vision, remains a tragic masterpiece of marvelous beauty and power. Even though no such person ever lived, as some contend in the drab, impertinent mood of factuality, nevertheless the supreme work of art remains in the conception of such a person. In either case the values and their source remain the same. It is because the poet is incapable of such a life that he is a poet at all. The grip of sense is strong upon him, and by reason of his characteristic swift shiftings of attention, always with a notable intensity, his frailties may exceed, for practical purposes, those of the solid citizens safe within his walls of sense. Some poets will be less able than others to achieve a livable adjustment, and much will depend upon the place and time in which the poet lives. . . .

The appreciation of the point we have been noting is apparent to anyone who has been called upon to read much verse produced by the average tyro. Almost always, in such cases, it is the technical detail of poetry that is imitated. The effort, as we may say in popular phrasing, is to make a noise like poetry; and one might be considered over-harsh if, in criticising such an effort, he should remark that the verses needed to be rewritten on a different theme by some other poet. Yet the criticism would more often be right than wrong, since the poetic mood of the whole, which is the major product of the creative dream, is the matter of fun-

damental importance in any art. The fatal fact about our average tyro is that he has not for a moment conceived his material outside the standardized field of sense, and he is imitating that special aspect of poetry which is concerned necessarily with the standardized field. He simply has nothing to convey that is not of the standard field commonly shared by all men. . . .

The error in criticism of poetry here emphasized is far more than a matter of erroneous opinion in the field of art. It is a social error with profound ethical consequences in the everyday life of men. We must come to realize the significance of the fact that there is a wide range of valid states of consciousness; that expanded consciousness, out of which genuine art grows, is not a matter of imagination in the ordinary sense of unreality, but of imagination in the literal sense of representing by images an extended view of reality by which alone it is possible to live humanly. The world can be no more for us than that representation of it which is built up in us, and the dogmatic common-sense man therefore limits his world to the one standardized spot upon which his attention is rigidly fixed. But the whole of a man must be the whole of his conscious field and his world is limited in reality to what his consciousness can realize. We are generally far less than half men in our normal relations, we may be sure, and our materialistic society exists in a very small fraction of the humanly realizable world.

The technique of art is the technique of an extended attention, realizing an extended world through its larger relations. The values of art are, for that reason, fundamental ethical values in the broadest practical sense, without which there can be no genuine education; and any society, however complex, will be civilized in proportion as it admits these values as real and integral in its scheme of practical things. To regard the arts as merely entertaining, or as a means of escape from reality, is to miss the point utterly and to lose

the values. These values are called humanistic, and for a good reason, as we see; but if we should give the name animalistic to the values of materialistic science, we might make our meaning clearer for those who must have all their ideas neatly boxed off from each other; but all values must be interdependent, as the parts of any whole are interdependent. To ignore the higher is to have no human justification for the lower; and to deny the lower is to have nothing upon which the higher may act.

Since the narrow standard field is that for which speech evolves and manners and customs develop, it is only in this field that men may differ hopelessly. Modern psychology shows that, as the outer field is penetrated, differences drop away; and since it is the purpose of art to represent the wider world, art tends to become, as has often been said, but generally with no convincing reason for the saying, the one universal means of communion, not only between individuals of the same race, who are so often separated in a pitiful fashion, but between different races and times. Science, in so far as it insists exclusively upon the reality of the narrower field, can differentiate; the art consciousness alone can identify men. The process of identification is the creative dream, the loss of self in a wider regard of the object.

It will have been seen by this time that my purpose is in no way concerned with "Art for Art's sake." Though I have spent all my years since boyhood on the art of poetry—and at a cost that was sometimes hard to pay—I have not fallen into the belief that even the greatest poetry is important in itself. Life itself is everything, and both art and science are merely strategic methods by which men may live more fully. If art is not concerned with the actual revelation of a wider world, then let men seek momentary forgetfulness by cheaper means. It would be better still, if the prevailing notion of human life and relations were true, to concentrate our energies on the production of lethal gas to be released

all over the world at a given moment—a last tremendous act of courage, fit to thrill with admiration the least gentlemanly god that men have ever wrought out of their own fears and cruelties to each other. But there is no justification for despair. Young as we are on this planet, and terrible as has been our experience, we have succeeded in evolving super-brutal values that can save us whenever they shall come into practical use; and those values grow out of the wider visioning that results in art.

If art be an actual continuous revelation of a wider and more humanly habitable world, then what can we expect of a society that is controlled by shrewd, "practical," sense-bound men who base their schemes upon the conceptions and petty personalisms of the narrow field of brutal values? There was certainly meaning in the saying that without vision the people perish; but we have an ingenious way of killing the vital meaning of such sayings by sentimentalizing them in order that we need not act upon them.

THE FUNCTION OF THE FINE ARTS*

By Jesse H. Coursault

(Jesse H. Coursault, Professor of the History and Philosophy of Education and Dean of the Faculty of the School of Education in the University of Missouri, attempts in *The Principles of Education* to survey the results of scientific experimentation in education, and to relate them to a definite philosophy which can be used to indicate values. He discusses how new purposes are made in the mind of the individual or in society, and the function of the arts in setting new patterns of action.)

The short-sighted view of the value of the fine arts also may be stated in the words of Spencer:

"And now we come to that remaining division of human

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life which includes the relaxations, pleasures, and amusements filling leisure hours. After considering what training best fits for self-preservation, for the obtainment of sustenance, for the discharge of parental duties, and for the regulation of social and political conduct, we have now to consider what training best fits for the miscellaneous ends not included in these—for the enjoyment of Nature, of Literature, and of the Fine Arts, in all their forms. Postponing them as we do to things that bear more vitally upon human welfare; and bringing everything, as we have, to the test of actual value; it will perhaps be inferred that we are inclined to slight these less essential things. No greater mistake could be made, however. We yield to none in the value we attach to aesthetic culture and its pleasures. Without painting, sculpture, music, poetry, and the emotions produced by natural beauty of every kind, life would lose half its charm. So far from thinking that the training and gratification of the tastes are unimportant, we believe the time will come when they will occupy a much larger share of human life than now. When the forces of Nature have been fully conquered to man's use—when the means of production have been brought to perfection—when labor has been economized to the highest degree—when education has been so systematized that a preparation for the more essential activities may be made with comparative rapidity—and when, consequently, there is a great increase of spare time; then will the poetry, both of Art and Nature, rightly fill a large space in the minds of all. . . . Architecture, sculpture, painting, music, poetry, etc., may be truly called the efflorescence of civilized life."

It is true that the fine arts do belong, in a large measure, to the leisure time of life. When the individual is permitted to escape the wearisome demands of practical life with its serious responsibilities, they offer to him easy pathways to a delightful land of make-believe, where his imagination can play unrestrained and his spirit can be refreshed. But al-

though he may not be conscious of the fact, play is conducive here, as elsewhere, to the serious business of life; it is not for itself alone. The kitten that scampers after a leaf fluttering in the wind, is preparing for the necessity later of capturing its prey; children in their many forms of play gain better control of their bodies, and acquire other abilities useful in the practical life. Likewise, while the individual is enjoying good poetry, sculpture, painting, or music, he is developing and organizing, with no conscious effort on his part, feelings of value, which as purposes take the leadership of his conduct in the world of practical activity and thereby make his life more worthful. While enjoying the play *Hamlet*, he acquires an appreciation of the value of action to realize his ideals when "the time is out of joint"; while enjoying the singing of the national anthem, he enriches his appreciation of national ideals.

When Spencer says that he yields to none in the value he attaches to aesthetic culture and its pleasures, and that without painting, sculpture, music, poetry, and the emotions produced by natural beauty of every kind, life would lose half its charm, he looks no further than the immediate enjoyable feelings that come with them, not to their value as definite guides to more worthful action beyond the library, art gallery, music room, or scene of natural beauty. When he calls the fine arts the efflorescence of civilized life, the champion of the sciences is not mindful that flowers have important functions in the economy of plant life, but intends to convey the impression that they are produced only to be looked at and smelled! This short-sighted view makes it appear that the fine arts will come to their own after all social difficulties have been vanquished. If, however, the influence of the fine arts in giving ideals and thereby in preparing men to work for the advancement of civilization is recognized, Spencer's conclusion here is as illogical as to hold that a worker should postpone preparing for the duties of his

calling until he has the leisure that goes with a retiring allowance.

When the fine arts arouse feeling, they must, according to the laws of human development, nourish the ideal nature of acts associated with these feelings. This fact has been explained in the discussion of how new purposes are made. This transfer of value is inevitable, for every thrill of appreciation is an incipient purpose which commands activity for the realization of the value revealed by it; and though acts but touch the hem of the garment of this feeling, virtue gets into them and makes them appear worthful in themselves. There must always be two kinds of values derived normally from the fine arts; the immediate pleasure which comes with appreciation, and the enrichment of ideals through the transfer of feeling. One is a fleeting thrill; the other is a permanent acquisition in the building of character. There can be no question as to which marks the essential function of the fine arts.

Only when the ideal-giving subject matter is connected with the hours of work as well as with the hours of leisure, can it give even the refined enjoyment which has loomed so large before the short-sighted. Because men have hungered and loved and fought and lost and triumphed and worshiped, they can appreciate the best in poetry, painting, and music. Symbolic reference to these things by the fine arts arouses strong emotion just because they do point to practical realities which men feel in the pulsations of their own blood. And not only must appreciation be fed constantly in this way by values which originate in the practical life, but, if the individual does not act to realize the purposes to which the fine arts direct his attention, his capacity for getting pleasure from the fine arts is decreased. The first stage of this is marked by vapid sentimentality and the next by the unresponsiveness of the blasé. In a word, the thrills which are aroused by the fine arts have inherited their worth

from the practical life out of which they have been born, and it is their duty to pass on this inheritance to a progeny of new and better leaders for life's struggle. If they fail to do this, their birthright has been sold for a mess of pottage.

That the practical value of the fine arts overshadows the value of the momentary pleasure which they give, is evident when the two come into conflict. In the case of food, the sense of taste gives pleasure and at the same time guidance as to what should be eaten. But no matter how much enjoyment the eating of anything gives, if we find that the result is injurious to the body, there is no question as to whether temporary pleasure or permanent welfare of the body should be preferred. So in the case of the fine arts, no amount of temporary pleasure can ever be justified when it is known to result in a lowering of ideals and consequent perverted conduct. The pleasurable excitement given by the fine arts is only incidental; the main result is their effect upon action.

The truth that the fine arts have important practical effects beyond the mere giving of pleasure does not mean that either the artist or the individual enjoying the art creation must be conscious of these effects, any more than that, in the enjoyment of a meal, one must be conscious of the process of nutrition and the effect of the food upon the body; or that in play the child must be conscious of the preparation which he is receiving for the serious business of later life. In the fine arts, attention should be centered upon those things which give thrills of appreciation and those things which through connection with these thrills of appreciation receive new values. The consequences take care of themselves, and any analysis of consequences would cool the feeling, bring in other associated ideas than those to be given value, and thus distract from the purpose-making process. In fact, it would center attention upon the solving of problems and thereby substitute the control-making process for the purpose-making process. So far as the individual is con-

cerned at the time, the intelligent appreciation of fine arts is an end in itself, but, nevertheless, he receives the benefit for practical life. The essential value of his experience in studying the fine arts depends upon this benefit.

The short-sighted view which, in seeking the function of sciences, looks no farther than the immediate pleasure in contemplating scientific truth, dates back to the time of Plato and other classical philosophers. Some of the leaders of thought then reached the conclusion that the highest ideal towards which man can struggle on earth and which in heaven is the supreme attribute of the Divine Being is knowledge,—not knowledge for the sake of control, but knowledge for its own sake. Sciences, according to this view, are their own justification. Simply to know them repays fully the student for burning the midnight oil; the noble pleasure which the contemplation of truth inspires in him is the greatest reward for his long and arduous task.

This belief has a strong foundation in human nature. Individuals have an inborn desire to know, which is manifested throughout life, from childish curiosity to philosophic wonder. Copernicus, when a child fingering unfamiliar objects, asked what they were and found pleasurable satisfaction when his nurse classified them with reference to the meanings he had already acquired. Copernicus, when he had become a man and had put away childish things, still retained his desire to know and became dissatisfied when some celestial phenomena were found to be strangers to the meanings which older astronomers had taught him. Since there was no representative of society to make the needed explanation, he worked patiently until he found a classification of phenomena which gave these strangers their places. Since the desire to acquire knowledge is so prominent in the scientist and philosopher, who give their lives to such work, their judgment with regard to the function of the sciences is liable to be prejudiced by this desire.

Does the pleasurable feeling in contemplating truth, however noble this feeling may be, mark the essential function of the sciences? Has nature given us hunger, love, and zest in the battle of life only that Satan may have a means by which to tempt us from the holy experience in our laboratories and libraries? Or do we go into our laboratories and libraries not only to contemplate the truth that may be found there; but also,—which is far more important,—to acquire means to satisfy our hunger, to consecrate our love, and to win in the battle of life our spiritual freedom?

The nature of knowledge itself gives the answer. Just as truly as the fine arts begin and end in practical life, and depend upon it for sustenance, so do the sciences. Ideas which are embodied in means of control, whether they are the data with which the sciences begin or the principles with which they end, are, as we have learned, plans of action that have been developed in overcoming practical difficulties. Their meanings are just these uses. To be captured by some investigator and cooped in the pigeonholes of a scientific treatise for the mere purpose of being looked at, is indeed a sad fate for them. Shut off from their useful connections with practical action, they would become dead forms from which the life of meaning has departed. And then even the contemplation of them would lose its pleasurable satisfaction.

The "pure" scientist, who seeks truth for its own sake, represents only one phase of scientific activity specialized in the division of labor. He is justified in not looking beyond his immediate purpose of seeking the truth, because others, by applying his conclusions to the practical affairs of life, supplement his work and thereby give to it significance and value.

History, the fine arts, and the sciences organize the individual's appreciations and means of control so as to make them the pathways through which life is guided to its fullest and best realization. The worth of these classes of subject

matter in this service determines the value of the immediate pleasure and cultural influence which they give. Whoever does not see beyond this immediate pleasure reaches a short-sighted conclusion that would separate appreciation and theory on the one hand from practice on the other, and would eventually preclude the attainment of the highest values of either. Just as the parts of the human body get their full significance and value from their functional relations to the other parts of the body, so do the various forms of experience get their significance and value from their functional relations to the other forms of experience. Just as the parts of the body are members one of another, so these forms of experience are members one of another. Isolated they dwindle and die, but working together in the service of the whole, both they and the whole of which they are parts attain the highest welfare.

THE FUNCTION OF ART*

By James Mickel Williams

(In the collection of these articles on the function of art and literature, selection has been purposely limited to those who are not professional teachers of literature. Students sometimes think the English teacher may be guilty of special pleading in behalf of his hobby. James Mickel Williams is Professor of Economics and Sociology in Hobart College, and has written a number of books in his field. It seems that no final study of sociology or of psychology can omit discussion of so fundamental activity as that involved in the arts.)

Literary and other art criticism must begin with the questions, "What is literature?" "What is art?" The Greeks maintained the imitation of nature to be essential in the art

*Reprinted from *Principles of Social Psychology*, by James Mickel Williams, by and with permission of, and special arrangement with, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., authorized publisher, 1927.

impulse,[12] wherefore, in their criticism of art, the implied standard of judgment was the relation of the work of art to the artist's nature. Modern critics, on the other hand, consider, primarily, its relation to the audience.[13] What art does for people is becoming more and more the essential consideration.

The primary function of art for the masses is to stir the emotions in a way to relieve from the intensity or monotony of life. Emotions that relieve are those that are unduly suppressed in the engrossing social relations.[14] This functioning of art in the development of personality was at first largely subconscious and still continues so in the esthetic enjoyment of the masses. But, in the few who enjoy literature and fine art, the process is conscious. This function of art in serving the conscious development of personality is seen in the increasing prominence of the subjective or introspective element in literature and in all fine art.[15]

The nature of the art that appeals to people will depend not entirely on their impulses as human beings but on the trend that has been given to the organization of their dispositions by their occupation, social class and national allegiance. There is also the bent to character imparted by personal disposition and capacity of imagination. The degree of idealization, as distinguished from mere emotional reinforcement, of which a person is capable must enter into the determination of what is art and what is not art for that person. Similarly the different degrees of idealization of which the different classes of a nation are capable must enter into the determination of what is art and what is not art for the different classes. The artistic product must be such as to stimulate some idealization, some imagination.

[12] Plato, *Republic*, X:597-599; Aristotle, *Poetics*, Chs. I-VI.
[13] Buck, *The Social Criticism of Literature.*
[14] Hocking, *Human Nature and Its Remaking*, Ch. XXXV.
[15] *Ibid.*, 3.

The rise of the conception of art as serving a socially limited development of personality has been gradually affecting artistic standards as it has religious beliefs. But there is this difference between art and religion: the former stimulates the free exercise of the imagination while the latter cultivates attitudes of suggestibility to certain symbols. The suggestive power of these symbols may be enhanced by esthetic treatment,[16] but the object of such treatment is not to give an esthetic experience but to enhance the appeal of the symbols.

Religion in its simpler forms is an expression of the impulse for protection, which is satisfied in children by their relation to the parent and later attaches to the religious symbols. Art is an expression of the impulse for an effortless flow of sensation or harmony of ideas. It releases the imagination from the service of a set purpose and the imagination serves it by releasing repressed impulses. In natures in which opposing dispositions are strong and there is intense spiritual conflict, religion is the impulse not merely for supernatural protection but for a personal relation with a power not one's own that releases from subservience to worldly social standards, from all worries because of unsatisfied impulses for superiority or other selfish aims, and sets free the sympathetic and intellectual dispositions. Experience shifts from the egoistic dispositions and the impulse is to convey to others the joy of this great experience. An esthetic experience, also, represents a shift from the practical life to an idealistic happiness, an experience in which the artist can comprehend and voice the aspirations and struggles of a people or a class without losing his tranquillity, because of the sustaining power of the imagination. Art productions that are sublime, as Milton's, require a religious experience of release and a new life through self-

[16] "Leuba, Art and Religion," *Intern. Jour. Ethics*, July, 1917, pp. 513-517.

elimination,[17] as well as the more strictly esthetic experience of imagination and sensitive discrimination.

The impulse for the effortless enjoyment of sensation and ideas is a normal daily experience of people generally and appears at the end of the day's work. It is a function of art to provide stimuli and ideas that satisfy this impulse and so relieve from the concentration of work and induce relaxation. Art appreciation is, therefore, distinct from work. But the ideas enjoyed for their own sake have also an impulsive force of their own and may, therefore, be such as to promote concentration and effort when the time for work recurs. They do not so act in the immediate esthetic experience because that is an experience of flow of sensations or harmony of ideas, of which no one produces its particular impulsive effect. But these potential effects may be such as, if produced, would enlarge the capacity of the individual for effective purposeful action. An habitual cultivation of art will conserve the idealistic side of man's nature, and provide a reserve for emergencies that tax the whole man.

We are not to think of art as only for the unusual person, but for the normal personality. The processes of the work-relaxation rhythm include imagery and ideas that promote strength, force, efficiency in purposive action, and that induce complete relaxation; and it is a function of art to facilitate the rhythm by providing imagery and ideas that suggest strength and concentration and that induce relaxation and mental play. Imagery may, also, relieve from abnormal depression which is caused by failure or exhaustion in the course of purposive action. Art has, then, this three-fold function—to stimulate in work, to induce relaxation and to exalt above depression. It does so through the imagination which stimulates impulses that raise the individual to higher levels of power and insight or that tranquillize and give more perfect rest.

[17] Hocking, *op. cit.*, p. 291.

The individual must put forth effort and concentrate if he is to give zest and spontaneity to the impulse for the enjoyment of sensations and ideas which asserts itself after work. When art is used to stir impulses which, because of a purposeless life, are not otherwise in action, esthetic appreciation loses its spontaneity and degenerates into sentimentalism. "Sentimentalism is the cultivation of emotion for the sake of the thrill, of the subjective experience. It is distinguished from sentiment, which is spontaneous and innocuous, because the pleasure the latter affords comes unsought, and is the result of the normal reaction of a sensitive temperament to a situation. It is similarly distinguished from passion and the more intense forms of genuine emotion for these also are spontaneous and unforced. Further, while real passion seeks its natural outlet in action, the sentimentalist is characterized by the fact that his interest in the object of his worked-up emotion ceases when it has served its purpose of providing the desired excitement."[18]

Sentimentalism has a wide range outside of mere esthetic experience. For instance, men and women sometimes go about dreaming of doing philanthropic work, filling notebooks with quotations and reflections, but doing nothing. They enjoy reading about social and missionary work, and form societies for studying such work. They get the satisfaction of ideas without any of the strain of effort; and their philanthropic plans are apt to be impracticable because they are made for the enjoyment of ideas rather than from any serious purpose. On the other hand, one who is in the midst of action may, in periods of bafflement and weariness, enjoy ideas without any serious purpose because one is using them not as a substitute for thought and action but for much needed rest and inspiration in the midst of it. Art may, therefore, function for the development of personality or for its perversion. The artist who panders to indolence by crea-

[18] Neilson, *Essentials of Poetry*, pp. 208-209.

tions that substitute for the natural action of impulses a sentimental excitement lends himself to the degradation of personality. For, unless the individual has the normal daily experience of purposive action, the esthetic side of his nature ceases to retain any vitality.

THE AESTHETIC EXPERIENCE*

By Laurence Buermeyer

(In the Preface to the first edition of *The Aesthetic Experience* the author, Laurence Buermeyer, Assistant Professor of Philosophy in Washington Square College, New York University, states his conviction "that art is woven into the whole texture of life and is unintelligible if taken as an isolated phenomenon," and that "we must understand human nature if we are to understand any of its manifestations, of which art is one." It is the purpose of the present text to help students identify and evaluate types of activity which may be called esthetic. This extract may be of special assistance.)

The enjoyment of art is ordinarily looked upon as something detached from the serious business of life, as an episode in an existence otherwise fundamentally non-aesthetic. Art is conceived as shut up in books, concert-halls, and museums; as, perhaps, a legitimate preoccupation on a trip to Europe; but under ordinary circumstances a relaxation, and if more than that, a distraction or even a dissipation. For a few individuals, writers, musicians, or painters, it is more than a by-play or avocation; but for the mass of men concern with it is an interlude, and its production is of course out of the question. In this it resembles religion. To go to a museum and to go to church alike involve a break with our usual habits. Both are expeditions into worlds other than that in which our every-day occupations go on. And both worlds are suspect from the point of view of the habitual

* Reprinted by permission from *The Aesthetic Experience*, by Laurence Buermeyer, published by The Barnes Foundation, 1924; second edition 1929.

dweller in the "real" world. The man who attempts to treat the precepts of religion as applicable to his business or personal relations is as little to be considered fully sane as the man whose life centres about art: both are at least likely to be "queer." A book which is thought of as "a work of art" is presumably to be read from a sense of duty, and in a frame of mind both self-conscious and self-congratulatory—a frame of mind, at any rate, quite different from that of simple straightforwardness with which we approach the merely enjoyable.

The mixture of suspicion and superstitious veneration with which "art" is frequently regarded points to an esoteric character in the object of the regard which, if many critics and writers on aesthetics are to be believed, undoubtedly does exist. Mr. Clive Bell, in his widely-read book, "Art," describes aesthetic experience as a kind of rapture or ecstasy, and assures us that it is foreign to all but a small minority of the human race. The reader of that book can scarcely avoid getting the impression that enjoyment of, for example, a picture, involves, or is at least akin to, going into a trance, and that Mr. Bell is justified in saying that such an experience is rare and is likely to remain so. But the view is by no means unusual. People who profess an ardent interest in art are prone to assume the attitude of the worshipper at the shrine, and to suggest that the ground of their pleasure can be comprehensible to none but the initiate. Art, in other words, constantly tends through its devotees' interpretation to become the object of a cult, and to appear as something that cannot possibly be made a treasure of the humble.

There are facts about the appreciation of art which lend themselves to such a view. It is undeniable that the growth of this particular sort of sensitiveness is a gradual process, requiring effort, patience, and a change in our ordinary habits of looking at things. Nor is there any doubt that there are individual variations in the aptitude for appreciation of each

of the types of beauty. If this is admitted, however, it still does not follow that between the world of art and the world of ordinary affairs there is the great gulf fixed that Mr. Bell and those who think like him find there.

People differ widely also in their aptitude for operating a typewriter, playing tennis, learning mathematics and co-operating with their fellows, and all these things require effort, patience and modification of previous habits. But there is not, therefore, anything esoteric about them; anything which would make the experience of those possessing the aptitudes in a high degree totally or permanently incomprehensible to those less adept. Few men can make scientific discoveries of the first magnitude, or estimate their value when made, but science is not for that reason a sealed book to lesser men. The fact of popular indifference to art is hardly to be questioned. One explanation is that something called the artistic temperament is rare; another is that training in aesthetic appreciation is rare.

The analogy between scientific and aesthetic experience may be turned to advantage. Both are potentially pervasive of life in all its departments, and to attain their fullest development both must be singled out from the mass of our experience and deliberately cultivated. The scientific attitude, however, was not something suddenly discovered and assumed once for all. The germ of it was present in humanity from the very start, in the universal disposition to ask the question, Why? To make any use of language, to apply names to things, we must in some degree generalize and classify, that is to say, recognize a common quality and a common tendency in the objects about us. To do this is to think. But interest in the "why" of things has had a long history. The desire to understand has been overlaid by countless other desires, which have more often than not distracted our interest from it and perverted its outcome. Only after many centuries has the race learned—and the les-

son is certainly not yet fully taken to heart—to distinguish between what we believe because the evidence is conclusive, and what we believe because our desires are compulsive. In precisely similar fashion our perception of beauty has been fitful and occasional because we have not known how to look for it, because other qualities have solicited and distracted our attention. The practical corollary is obvious. Just as the necessary preliminary to any liberation and development of our intellectual interests must be the discrimination of that particular strand in experience from those others with which it is ordinarily interwoven, so we can only begin the cultivation of our aesthetic interest when we have disentangled it from the practical, moral, scientific and religious concerns with which it is likely to be found commingled.

The purpose of this book is to effect such a disentanglement. The aesthetic poverty of most people's lives is due rarely, if ever, to any fundamental deficiency but to a lack of training. Of course there are books on art, there are museums here and there, and for the well-to-do there are the architecture and picture-galleries of Europe. It was not however, in the great ages of art, by occasional trips to picture-galleries that the mass of people developed the responsiveness, and artists the creative ability, that made those ages great. Unless art is felt to be something growing out of the interests that supply driving force to our daily life, it will remain the object of concealed or avowed indifference on the public's part, and of academic or dilettante professionalism on the artist's. The study of masterpieces, past and present, is an essential part of aesthetic education, but that study is likely to be misdirected at the start and to remain futile in the end unless those masterpieces are seen as the goal of a road which begins in ordinary human life. To show the beginnings of that road, and the stages by which

it approaches the summits of aesthetic achievement, is the task to which we must now address ourselves. . . .

We shall seek in the present chapter to show that aesthetic quality is an aspect of all activity, all perception, all thought, which is intelligent or reasonable. The contrary view is that beauty is something which inhabits a realm of its own, that enjoyment of it does not accrue as the result of a sensitive and intelligent ordering of all the fundamental interests of life, but must be specifically sought, must be a separate interest. So conceived, beauty appears as an embellishment of the world, an ornament or decoration added to it—added by the artist and perceptible only to those who have acquired a special sensitiveness to the "picturesque," to the lyric or dramatic, the comic or tragic, the grotesque or sublime. The contention which we shall urge is that to be conscious of beauty we need only, in the words that Matthew Arnold used of Sophocles, "see life steadily and see it whole."

Since it is intelligence, and the sensitiveness which intelligence brings with it, that is the key to beauty, we shall first try to clear away the ambiguities and popular misunderstandings that cling to the terms "intelligence" and "reason." We shall then consider intelligence at work, first upon the raw material provided by instincts in their primitive or unenlightened form, and next upon the activities which in the preceding chapter were designated as merely practical. It will be our effort to show that, transformed by reason, these instinctive and practical activities come to include what has been supposed to be the distinctive preoccupation of the artist, the perception or expression of beauty. Take any activity, any impulse however blind, any habit however mechanical, let it become conscious of its meaning or purpose, in the widest sense, and in the process it will become, in one and the same act, a part of the world of beauty. Such will be our thesis. When the nature of aesthetic experience or activity has thus been made apparent, we shall be able to

see more clearly the distinctive function or quality of what is called "fine art."

There is one more preliminary which must be gone through with before we come to our subject proper. In the last chapter we discussed the instinctive experiences out of which art grows, and pointed out that each of these experiences serves to open our eyes to a part of what lies about us, and to close them to another part. What is sometimes called the fact of apperception is a part of psychology without which any understanding of our aesthetic experience is impossible. The fact, very briefly expressed, is that we see only what we know how to look for. Unfortunately, it is generally taken for granted that we see all that there is to be seen. Of course it is admitted that we fail to understand much that we see, but it is assumed that this failure is wholly intellectual, and does not interfere with the accuracy and fulness of our actual perception. To speak then, as we have spoken and shall continue to speak, of varying degrees and orders of our perception of the world, is meaningless. How can there be degrees or kinds of perceptions of the real if we all perceive as much of the real as our senses testify to? Benedetto Croce so clearly exposes the error involved that his words deserve quotation at some length.

"There is an illusion or prejudice that we possess a more complete intuition of reality than we really do. . . . People think that all of us ordinary men imagine and intuit countries, figures, and scenes like painters, and bodies like sculptors; save that painters and sculptors know how to paint and carve such images, while we bear them unexpressed in our souls. They believe that anyone could have imagined a Madonna like Raphael; but that Raphael was Raphael because of his technical ability in putting that Madonna upon canvas. Nothing can be falser than this view." He goes on to say that what we ordinarily see is merely snatches of

things, blurs of impressions among which stand out only the more vivid colors and the sharper contours. The rest is haze and chaos, and to give it distinctness and form is often a matter of the utmost difficulty. "It has been observed by those who have best studied the psychology of artists that when, after having given a rapid glance at anyone, they attempt to obtain a real intuition of him, in order, for example, to paint his portrait, then this ordinary vision, that seemed so precise, so lively, reveals itself as little better than nothing. What remains is found to be at the most some superficial trait, which would not suffice even for a caricature. The person to be painted stands before the artist like a world to discover. . . . The painter is a painter because he sees what others only feel or catch a glimpse of, but do not see. We do not intuitively possess more even of our intimate friend, who is with us every day and at all hours, than at most certain traits of physiognomy which enable us to distinguish him from others."

Of course there is a sense in which all the traits or qualities are *there*, but they are there as are the sodium and chlorine in salt, as something to be extracted, not as something which springs to the eye. To see, to perceive, is an achievement. No two persons are ever aware of quite the same world, since each perceives what he is interested in, and how well he perceives it depends upon his gifts and the use he is able to make of them. It is a blunder and nothing else to suppose that there is less opportunity or less necessity for personal initiative in apprehension than in action.

CHAPTER 7

THE NATURE OF LITERATURE: POETRY

> It is only by Art, and especially by Poetry, that the imagination is regulated. Nothing is more frightful than imagination without taste.
>
> —GOETHE, *Literature and Art*

Literature is the universal art. It utilizes as its media words and the larger symbols of metaphor. It carries further the general language functions described in Part II. Most of us have a greater command of these media than we have of the colors of the painter, the marble of the sculptor, or the instruments of the musician. An extension of our knowledge of word values and sentence patterns—the aim of the work in Part II—is necessary for a richer literary culture; and the study of literature—of language in its most subtle use—is necessary for the development of a command of the chief instrument of thought. The two cannot be separated without unfortunate effect upon our cultural development.

Chapter 6 has given some intimation of the nature and the functions of art in the evolution of our civilization and in the education of the individual. In order to develop further the nature of one art form—literature—as a universal, functional way of thinking, we shall, in this chapter, consider some aspects of poetry as the type of all imaginative literature, for all imaginative thinking is essentially poetical.

The words *poet* and *poetry* have been given various meanings by writers in different ages. This is only what might have been expected—what has happened to all other words. Unfortunately, most people unreflectingly assume that a word has a definite and permanent meaning—like a hat

check. They read about poetry—when they read about it at all—without recognizing these various meanings, and the result is, naturally, considerable confusion of mind.

Poets and Makers

The word *poet* comes from a Greek word meaning "to make, to create." In England, poets were long called *makers*. For the Greek, the poet was the man who created through his imagination, the man most like the gods. He was the seer, the divine man; at once the philosopher, the statesman, the teacher, the revealer of hidden truth, the preserver of racial values.

During the centuries, the peoples of Europe have preserved the word *poet* in their vocabularies with something of the original meaning to designate the maker of imaginative stories, either in prose or in verse. As civilization developed and the imaginative life of the people became more complex, the word became more specialized in meaning, until, at present, it is customary to restrict its application to writers of verse. It is conceivable that the history of the word might have taken a different course, that it might have been extended to cover all kinds of creative thinkers as they were differentiated from the mass of mankind. In that case, we should naturally have called Galileo, and Harvey, and Columbus, and Washington, poets.

It is quite evident that the application of the word *poet* to the "creator" of songs and stories was a trope. It is equally evident that this transfer of the word was made comparatively late in the life of the race, after certain gifted men had developed a story technique requiring special skill and a long apprenticeship—a technique unknown to the average man, and therefore mysterious and divine. But the transfer must have antedated the recognition of the function of creative imagination in the thinking of the philosopher, the statesman, the scientist, the inventor.

The circumstances which accompanied the restriction of the word to the maker of stories marked by some easily observed characteristics of rhyme, rhythm, or parallelism of statement, can be easily reconstructed. Among primitive peoples, every man was at once hunter, warrior, statesman, story-teller. Literature was the natural expression of everyday impulses. As life became more complex, certain men, because of special adaptability, appropriated leadership in these various activities. Men with more than normal insight into the forces which moved their fellows discovered—more or less consciously—that they could secure the satisfactions of power and respect by making stories. These satisfactions were inherent in society, and they have been among the chief forces making for social evolution.

Several facts tended to fix an artificial pattern upon the language of those who assumed the function of story-tellers, poets. Any one could tell a story in unpatterned language, but only the few gifted ones were skilled in this added technique. Pattern in story organization and in language became necessary aids to memory as the body of story materials grew larger. Primitive song was closely associated with tribal dance, and the rhythm of the dance created a marked rhythm in the song. Strong rhythm has a definite mesmeric effect which the tribal poets were quick to utilize. But perhaps the chief influence in the differentiation of a universal social function—story-telling, the imaginative remaking of life—into the prerogative of a few gifted individuals was the social approval that followed the development of a body of materials, skills, and techniques, unknown to the many uninitiated and therefore deserving of special honor. These materials and skills were passed on from master to chosen disciple in a closed group, to whom were attributed divine—or diabolic—powers. This primitive reverence for the poet, based upon the power of a mysterious technique, has col-

ored much of the thinking and more of the writing about poetry, even to the present time.

By the side of this technical poetry, some of which was preserved orally until it became immortalized in writing, there was, in each generation, a great mass of ephemeral literature—the simple, personal reconstruction of experiences, the "castles in Spain," of the people themselves. This literature has not been preserved from the past. Even today it is but rarely written down. Few persons are even aware of its existence. It is usually ignored by those who write about or teach literature. But because it is a way of thinking common to all men, even to those who never read what is printed in books, one is forced to believe that it has been and is a more powerful force in social evolution—certainly it is a more widespread force—than the literature which is more generally recognized.

This brief discussion of the literary activities of early mankind would have little interest for us, perhaps, if our books were not so filled with statements only slightly related to fact. Most college students seem to have read or to have been told that poetry is the earliest form of literature, that primitive man was more "poetical"—whatever that may mean—than civilized man, and more imaginative. These unfortunate statements do not increase our appreciation of the nature of poetry, or enable us to understand its function in our own lives. It seems clear that the earliest literature of any race must have been much like the earliest literature of a child—the simple, imaginative re-living of interesting experience. Any technical pattern must have come comparatively late in the history of civilization. The imagination of primitive man was as crude as his scientific processes. Yrjö Hirn calls attention to the fact that, whatever the value of primitive poetry, it does not lie in invention. He believes that much of what has been called the imagination of primitive peoples as deduced from their literature is actually the

result of the deficient observation and the faults of memory characteristic of uneducated men. We must remember, also, that modern students of early literature tend to revitalize the metaphors in words which were certainly as prosaic to their users as *electricity* and *president* are to us.

The Pattern of Poetry

Poetry, in the modern meaning of the word, is one division of the larger field of imaginative literature, coordinate with drama, novel, biography, etc. It is, like these other forms of literature, a normal function of life, and the language of its supreme moments. Its technical mark is, according to Mackail, "patterned language."

It does not seem desirable, in this preliminary discussion of poetry, to describe the various patterns which poets use. However, discussions of scansion so frequently confuse students and give a wrong impression of the nature of verse, that a brief description may be of service.

Normal language is made up of a succession of accented and unaccented syllables which form a kind of rhythm. The child must learn this normal sentence rhythm before he can make new sentences out of words. The more obvious verse forms arrange these syllables in a definite order:

A mile / behind / is Glouces / ter town.

Each unit, consisting of one accented and one or more unaccented syllables, is called a foot. There are four feet in the line quoted above. The verses of *The Idylls of the King* have, normally, five feet made up of one unaccented syllable followed by an accented syllable; that is, they are iambic pentameter verses.

˘ ´ ˘ ´ ˘ ´ ˘ ´ ˘ ´
Then quick/ly rose / Sir Bed/ivere, / and ran,
˘ ´ ˘ ´ ˘ ´ ˘ ´ ˘ ´
And, leap/ing down / the ridg/es light/ly, plunged

Among / the bul/rush beds / and clutch'd / the sword,
And strong/ly wheel'd / and threw / it.

The scanning of verse may be an interesting and a valuable exercise for one who wishes to write poetry, or for one who merely desires to intensify his appreciation of its music. But we must be on our guard against the frequent assumption that good verse always fits the scheme, that it scans perfectly, and that only the failure of the poet completely to master his verse form produces lines that are "imperfect." This mechanical device for describing the rhythm of verse is only a measuring stick, and its chief value lies in its use to indicate the subtle and purposeful variations in pattern. A yard stick is a useful measuring implement, but it would be rather impertinent to try to reduce the height of all people to some multiple of the three-foot rule.

It is sometimes assumed in class work that each unit of verse rhythm is the equivalent of every other unit, that all accented syllables are equally accented, and all unaccented are subordinated to an equal degree. Much simple verse, no doubt, is written in this way, but the result is merely a kind of monotonous sing-song. Perhaps the real function of scanning may be suggested by marking another passage from the *Idylls*, and at the same time indicating as clearly as possible the actual accent and rhythm of the lines.

So all / day long// the noise / of bat/tle roll'd
Among / the moun/tains // by / the win/ter sea;
Until / King Ar/thur's Ta/ble, // man / by man,
Had fall'n / in Ly/onnesse // about / their lord,

King Ar/thur. // Then, / because / his wound / was deep,
The bold / Sir Bed/ivere // uplift/ed him,
And bore / him to / a chap/el // nigh / the field,
A bro/ken chan/cel // with / a bro/ken cross,
That stood // on a / dark strait / of bar/ren land.
On one / side lay / the O/cean, // and / on one
Lay a / great wa/ter, // and / the moon / was full.

The marks of the top line indicate the iambic pentameter norm for these verses. The marks of the second line indicate something like the reading I would give. The heavily stressed syllables are indicated by ′, the moderately stressed by ″, the slightly stressed by ‴, and the unstressed by ˘ . The cesura, the marked pause within the verse, is indicated by a double stroke, //. It will be noticed that the verses have from two to four words which receive strong stress, and that the cesura occurs after the second foot, in the middle of the third, middle fourth, etc. The rhythm of the last two lines is made very different from that of earlier lines by the large number of slightly stressed syllables in the one, and by the shift of primary emphasis to "lay" in the other. This changed rhythm definitely closes the picture and the paragraph. This subtle change of rhythm cannot be described at all except by reference to some norm, such as the markings used in scanning. And a description of it increases our sensitiveness to the effect.

The music of the lines is kept from being monotonous by

the shifting cesura, and by subtle variations of stress which cannot be fully indicated by any system of marking. This varied verse music is kept within bounds by the dominant iambic pentameter movement and by the constant primary stress on the final syllable of the line. Rhetorical emphasis is achieved by placing words which are important in thought at points which carry line emphasis—before the cesura and at the close of the line.

In contrast with the richness of the rhythmic variations in these lines, notice the monotony of rhythm in the following first stanza from Bryant's "Song of Marion's Men."

"Our rank is few but true and tried,
Our leader frank and bold;
The British soldier trembles
When Marion's name is told.
Our fortress is the good greenwood,
Our tent the cypress-tree:
We know the forest round us,
As seamen know the sea.
We know its walls of thorny vines,
Its glades of reedy grass,
Its safe and silent islands
Within the dark morass."

Pattern in poetry includes more than the rhythm of the individual lines. In the passage just quoted from Tennyson, the slow movement of the opening line is gradually quickened and seems to culminate near the close of the paragraph where the last two lines slow it down again. This movement of rhythm through a passage is part of its pattern. In some poems the stanza forms tend to pattern the thought and give it definiteness of outline. Often the objective symbol, as in "The Road Not Taken" (page 217), sets the mold for the thought.

Tone Values

Poets are careful not only for these rhythmic effects but also for that music which results from the selection of words for their tone values. Read the following passage from "The Passing of Arthur," and note the effect of the sounds used—of the *s*'*s*, of the vowels, and of the stop consonants near the close.

"Nor ever yet had Arthur fought a fight
Like this last, dim, weird battle of the west.
A deathwhite mist slept over sand and sea:
Whereof the chill, to him who breathed it, drew
Down with his blood, till all his heart was cold
With formless fear; and ev'n on Arthur fell
Confusion, since he saw not whom he fought.
For friend and foe were shadows in the mist,
And friend slew friend not knowing whom he slew;
And some had visions out of golden youth,
And some beheld the faces of old ghosts
Look in upon the battle; and in the mist
Was many a noble deed, and many a base,
And chance and craft and strength in single fights
And ever and anon with host to host
Shocks, and the splintering spear, and hard mail hewn,
Shield-breakings, and the clash of brands, the crash
Of battle-axes on shatter'd helms, and shrieks
After the Christ, of those who falling down
Look'd up for heaven, and only saw the mist;
And shouts of heathen and the traitor knights,
Oaths, insults, filth, and monstrous blasphemies,
Sweat, writhings, anguish, laboring of lungs
In that close mist, and cryings for the light,
Moans of the dying, and voices of the dead."

Poe was a master of tone values. Read carefully these lines from "The Bells."

"Hear the sledges with the bells,
Silver bells!
What a world of merriment their melody foretells!"

Notice the lightness and rapidity of the lines, the short vowels, the liquid consonants. Then notice how the vowels become more open and more round and the consonants more labored in the succeeding stanzas. The use of stop consonants in the later stanzas definitely slows down the reading rate and suggests the feeling of strain.

"Hear the mellow wedding bells,
Golden bells!
What a world of happiness their harmony foretells!
* * *
Hear the loud alarum bells,
Brazen bells!
What a tale of terror, now, their turbulency tells!
* * *
Hear the tolling of the bells,
Iron bells!
What a world of solemn thought their monody
compels!"

Matthew Arnold uses the same devices in *Sohrab and Rustum* to suggest to the reader the strain and laboring of the combatants:

"But in the gloom they fought, with blood-shot eyes
And laboring breath; first Rustum struck the shield
Which Sohrab held stiff out; the steel-spiked spear
Rent the tough plates, but failed to reach the skin,
And Rustum plucked it back with angry groan."

Symbols

Most poets seek also for concreteness, for vividness of sense impressions. The epic or narrative poet secures concreteness of impression by showing characters in action and by the use of vivid descriptive words. The lyric poet frequently secures the same "sensuous" quality by the use of symbols. Symbolism is one of the oldest of the conscious literary techniques. The allegory is perhaps the simplest form of symbolism in literature. In the allegory, the story is told not primarily for the sake of the story, but for the sake of the general truth which it holds before the mind. Symbolic expression is always indirect.

Matthew Arnold uses a symbol effectively in "Dover Beach." The opening picture is of the sea:

"The Sea is calm to-night.
The tide is full, and the moon lies fair
Upon the strait;—on the French coast the light
Gleams and is gone; the cliffs of England stand,
Glimmering and vast, out in the tranquil bay.
Come to the window, sweet is the night-air!
Only, from the long line of spray
Where the sea meets the moon-blanch'd land,
Listen! you can hear the grating roar
Of pebbles which the waves draw back, and fling,
At their return, up the high strand,
Begin, and cease, and then again begin,
With tremulous cadence slow, and bring
The eternal note of sadness in."

This scene with its mood of sadness symbolizes for the poet the recession of his early faith.

"The Sea of Faith
Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore
Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furl'd.

But now I only hear
Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,
Retreating, to the breath
Of the night-wind, down the vast edges drear
And naked shingles of the world."

In this poem, the author presents not only the symbol but also the thought which is associated with it. The modern symbolist seems to desire to find a symbol which carries the interpretation within itself. "The Road Not Taken" (page 217) is an excellent example. In this poem there is the symbol of the casual choice of one of two forest paths for the slightest of possible reasons. So clearly does the symbol suggest that we often chose one alternative instead of another on a mere whim, and that "way leads on to way" so that our whole later life is different—so inevitably does the symbol suggest this thought that the poet found it unnecessary to express it in words. Evidently nothing could be added to this poem without breaking the unity of the thought and symbol pattern. It has what is called "form."

The minor poets are not always so successful. They often use a series of symbols which are, in themselves, unrelated, and which get such unity as they have from some abstract theme which runs through the poem. For instance, in "A Psalm of Life," Longfellow uses this series of symbols: the soul that sleeps; life compared to a race with the grave as the goal; hearts compared to muffled drums, and life to a funeral march; living compared to a field of battle; people to cattle; good deeds to footprints; life to an ocean voyage, with discouragements compared to shipwreck, etc. Evidently, this series of symbols could be extended indefinitely —the only limit being the ingenuity of the writer. The poem lacks that element of definite "form" which is characteristic of "Dover Beach" and "The Road Not Taken."

A symbol should be consistent as a whole, and the details rich and vivid. In the often quoted lines,

"Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime,
And departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time;

Footprints, that perhaps another,
Sailing o'er life's solemn main,
A forlorn and shipwrecked brother,
Seeing, shall take heart again."

we have a symbol which refuses to materialize. It is difficult to visualize a "forlorn and shipwrecked brother" "sailing o'er" the sea and being heartened by the sight of footprints on the sands of the shore.

Symbolism is not merely a literary device for surface ornamentation. We cannot hold an abstract idea before the mind without some symbol. We cannot long think of death in the abstract, but we can think of the death of Caesar, or of Hamlet, or of Lear as presented imaginatively by Shakespeare. Or we can think of it as presented by Tennyson in "Crossing the Bar" under the symbol of a ship leaving the harbor. In the elaboration of a fortunate symbol, the writer—and incidentally the reader—often finds new meanings in his thought.

A very large part of the thinking of the world is guided by symbols. Creative thinking is especially concerned with the discovery and elaboration of new and truer symbols. The theory of biological evolution in the nineteenth century became a fruitful symbol for the guidance of thought in many other fields. But symbols also sometimes lead thought astray, and creative thinking must often concern itself with showing the fallacies of conventional symbolic associations.

Condensation

Another characteristic of poetry at its best is rapidity, condensation. The artificial form of verse permits a condensation which prose seldom attains. Perhaps all one needs to do to convince oneself of this fact is to attempt to turn the following lines from Browning into idiomatic prose.

"Then, welcome each rebuff
That turns earth's smoothness rough,
Each sting that bids nor sit nor stand but go!
Be our joys three-parts pain!
Strive, and hold cheap the strain;
Learn, nor account the pang; dare, never grudge
the throe!

For thence,—a paradox
Which comforts while it mocks,—
Shall life succeed in that it seems to fail:
What I aspired to be,
And was not, comforts me:
A brute I might have been, but would not sink
i' the scale."

These characteristics of poetry are not to be thought of as mere adornments of a thought that might be expressed without their aid. They are at once the means by which the writer gives form to his thought, and the only possible indication to the reader of the pattern into which he has cast some fragments of experience—the pattern which alone gives these fragments meaning.

Because poetry is a natural human function, like language, it has been a vital art in all ages. Because it is a more subtle language, it is essential to the highest reaches of thought. Because it is the most delicate instrument for the organization of life into meaningful patterns, it is the natural

expression of the most delicate as well as of the most profound of human longings, aspirations, passions. Because, from its very nature, it fulfils Lord Kames' standard of true taste, "that the maximum of richness, fullness, strength, and variety of impression should be contained in the narrowest limits," it has, of all the arts, the most powerful appeal to the emotions of men.

THE DEFINITION OF POETRY*

By John William Mackail

(J. W. Mackail was Professor of Poetry at Oxford from 1906 to 1911, coming in a long line of distinguished scholars who have occupied that chair. He has written on Greek and Latin and English literatures, and has translated the Odyssey into English verse. This discussion of poetry has been one of the most widely quoted essays on the subject since it was published.)

The sources of confusion, like the resulting confusions themselves, are many. But the principal one is this: that in defining poetry, as more generally in speaking or thinking about the poetry, two different and incommensurate things are mixed up with one another, namely, poetry as a function of life, a vital, creative, and progressive energy, and poetry as an art or technique. Poetry is both the one and the other; but the two are formally distinguishable, and the distinction is at the root of all clear thinking about poetry. The object of the following pages is to separate the formal or technical element in poetry from the other elements which go to make up its essence, and to try to get at a clear notion of that one element. Poetry in this sense is a concrete art, its material being language. . . .

All art implies composition: to the art which uses language as its vehicle, the term composition is specially and as it were

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primarily appropriated; and the definition which we are now seeking is that of poetry as a species of composition distinct from other species of composition all coming within the wider scope of the application of art to language, or what we call by a single comprehensive word, literature.

The essence of poetry technically, of poetry as an art working in language, is not that it is rhythmical. All elevated or impassioned language is that; at all events all elevated or impassioned language which possesses the amount of structure, of conscious artistic purpose, that is implied in its being literature at all. Nor is it the essence of poetry technically that it is metrical; for unless we stretch the meaning of the term much beyond ordinary usage, metre is not a necessary, though it is a normal and habitual predicate of poetry. What then is it?

The essence of poetry technically is that it is patterned language. This is its specific, central, and indispensable quality as a fine art. Pattern, in its technical use as applied to the arts, is distinct from composition generally. It is composition which has in it what is technically called a "repeat." The artistic power of the pattern-designer is shown in the way he deals with the problem of his repeat: the problem being, stated baldly, to make the rhythm of his repeat felt in such a way that the pattern which is based on and consists of a repeated unit may at the same time not fall asunder in separate units, but move and spread in a continuous and larger composition over the whole surface which is covered by the pattern.

In poetry this repeat is what is known by the name of verse. Verse opposed to prose is, in fact as well as in etymology, returning or repeating language, opposed to language which moves on without any such return or repeat. In this sense the definition given by Phillips is exact, if instead of saying that poetry consists of "rhythm or verses" we say that it consists of "rhythm in verses." In verses

which are merely mechanical there is not the rhythm; in rhythm which is not in verses there is not the quality that constitutes pattern. Neither apart from the other is technically poetry. A pattern which merely consists of mechanical repetition, without the repetition being caught up into a larger rhythm, is a pattern in the mechanical, but not in the artistic sense; it fails of being art because it lacks composition. A composition which has not pattern is art and may be art of a very high kind, but it is not the specific art with which we are dealing. In the art of composition applied to language, verse which consists of a series of detached units is not poetry, because the verse is not caught up into a larger rhythm; and rhythm which is not based on the repeat of verse is not poetry, because it has not the specific quality of pattern.

In language which comes within this technical definition, the verse, the return and repeat of pattern, may be of many kinds. Some are more patent, where the repeat is more obvious and, as it were, more detachable. Others are more subtle, where the repeat is more implicit and more organic. The feeling for poetry (we are still speaking of poetry in its technical sense) very largely consists of the feeling for rhythm in pattern, and for pattern in rhythm. With the born designer this feeling is instinctive; with all designers it is felt most in the actual process; it grows with exercise; up to the culmination of the artist's power the senses go on feeling it more swiftly and certainly, the hand executes more and more of what the senses feel. *Poeta nascitur et fit.*[1] But when the artist tries to explain what he is doing, or why and how he does it, he is often quite at a loss; he tries to give a reasoned explanation, and it is inadequate, it is perhaps unintelligible; it lays itself open to the easy task of destructive criticism. Or he falls back upon images and metaphors, in the attempt to give some vivid and concrete

[1] The poet is born and made.

expression of what he feels but is unable or unwilling to define. These last are illustrations rather than definitions: among them however are included many of the most searching and illuminating things that have been said about poetry. In the double attempt the artist often falls into obvious inconsistencies, due to the emphasis being thrown on one or another aspect of the complex matter with which he is dealing. It is through the grouping and synthesis of these partial and formally consistent views that we arrive at a larger and more comprehensive view. Thus, to take one instance out of many, Shelley in his *Defence of Poetry*, when he is putting emphasis on the quality of poetry as a means of imaginative expression, lays down the sweeping doctrine that "the distinction between poets and prose writers is a vulgar error." Yet, just a little before, when he was regarding the subject from another side, he had said, with perfect truth but obvious inconsistency, that "the language of poets has ever affected a certain uniform and harmonious recurrence of sound, without which it were not poetry." Uniform recurrence not only is not a quality of prose, but is a quality which vitiates prose, makes it cease to be prose in an artistic sense. Wherever it is allowed to occur through negligence or accident, it results in what is technically bad prose. A little later in the same treatise, Shelley combines the two aspects of the thing. "The functions of the poetic faculty," he says, "are twofold; by one it creates new materials of knowledge and power and pleasure; by the other, it engenders in the mind a desire to reproduce and arrange them according to a certain rhythm and order."

The repeating and yet continuous pattern in language which makes it technically poetry is subject to the general laws of composition and also to certain special laws of its own. These special laws vary from language to language, from country to country, and from time to time; they allow of many types. These are often far apart from one an-

other; and it is only by paying attention to the general test of pattern that we can readily bring them under a single definition. So likewise the repeat in the pattern may be simpler or more complex, may be patent on the surface or implicit in the structure. A general rule may indeed be laid down, that the repeat must not be so accented as to destroy the continuity, nor the movement so continuous that there is no repeat left. It is clear that a very wide field is left between these limits. On the one hand there is the kind of poetry where the recurrence does not amount to what is generally called verse, it is not measurable in definite lengths of stresses or quantities or accents, and yet is there sufficiently to be felt. In such cases it may be difficult to draw a precise boundary between poetry and impassioned prose: in the Book of Job, to take a familiar instance, or in other parts of what are called the poetical books of the English Old Testament: for in such cases we are on the borderland where poetry and prose tend to coalesce or are not yet fully differentiated in function; where poetry has not worked out its full nature, in the Aristotelian phrase, or else where prose attempts to clothe itself in the garments and exercise the functions of poetry. On the other hand there is the kind of poetry where the verse has not only become definite metre—whether that metre be expressed in terms of quantity or accent or stress—but has let metre dominate over continuous rhythm of structure and has treated the specific requirements of metre as though they covered the whole technical requirements of poetical composition.

Milton's attack on rhymed verse in the preface to the second issue of *Paradise Lost* is directed towards emphasising this latter defect. That famous pronouncement is often misquoted or misinterpreted. Milton did not, as is often supposed, wish to abolish rhymed verse. What he did was to point out, with exact truth, the dangers or inconven-

iences to which rhymed poetry is subject; and even so, he limits his strictures carefully to large works, which require a correspondingly large freedom of pattern, "rime being," as he says, "no necessary adjunct of poem or good verse, in longer works especially," where its tendency is to make poets "express many things otherwise, and for the most part worse, than else they would have expressed them." But he goes on to lay equal stress on the like defect in rhymeless metres which allow the unit of pattern to dominate the larger rhythm. The "musical delight" of poetry, according to his doctrine, "consists in apt numbers, fit quantity of syllables, and the sense variously drawn out from one verse into another." In the complex fabric of patterned language which is poetry, each artist, according to the particular tendency and affinity of his genius, lays stress on one or another element. He may even deny the authenticity or relevance of elements to which exaggerated importance is attached by popular usage. But such a denial must be taken in relation to the circumstances, and to the particular point on which he is at the time insisting.

Let me recapitulate the substance of the matter in the briefest possible words. Poetry, while in its essence it is a function of life, and as indefinable as life itself except through imagination expressing itself in symbols and metaphors, is formally and technically patterned language: the technical essence of pattern is repeat: and where there is no repeat, there is technically no poetry. The art of the pattern-designer lies in the choice of the unit of repeat and thereafter in the way he uses it as the basis of structural composition obeying the larger laws of rhythm and growth: and so it is with the art or technique of the poet.

If we keep firmly by this definition (or if we prefer not to call it a definition, by this central clue) we shall not be much troubled by the dust of controversy that has risen round such phrases as "prose poetry"; for we shall realise

that all such phrases arise in a confusion, and it is natural therefore that fresh confusion should arise out of them. As composition, as a fine art, prose has its own nature and virtue, and they are different from those of poetry: if forced beyond these in order to be brought within some loose definition of poetry it only departs from its own nature and loses its own excellence, without acquiring the specific nature and specific excellence of poetry.

This definition of poetry as a formal art must be judged on its own merits, and as it appears to give, or to fail in giving, a sufficiently logical and precise account of the facts. But there is a test to which we are able to submit it. If it fails to meet this test, there is something wrong with it. If it satisfies this test, there is at least a presumption that it is sound. I will now proceed very briefly, to indicate the test and apply it, or at least suggest its application.

Much of the confusion which has arisen with regard to the nature and definition of poetry has arisen, as we have seen, from failure to draw any clear distinction between two things which are different. One of these is the formal quality of poetry as an art; the other is its essential or vital quality in relation to life—whether we speak of poetry in this regard as the interpretation of life, or as the imaginative expression of life, or in more general terms as a function of life. But these two things, though formally distinguishable, are not actually separable. There is no such thing as art in the abstract. Concrete poetry consists of form and substance; and just as there is no substance apart from form, so there is no form apart from substance. It follows that in the thing poetry, form and substance must have a mutual and intimate relation. We may express this relation, according to the general terms in which we choose to put our system of thought, by saying that form embodies itself in a certain substance, or that substance takes shape under certain forms, or that between form and substance there exists a certain

pre-established harmony. In any case, what is true formally of the form must also be true substantially of the substance —of the thing in which the form has its visible embodiment and concrete existence. The work of art must have a relation to life analogous to the relation between the form of art and the material in which it works. Poetry is a particular form of art working in the material of language, and we have defined it as patterned language. If the technical art of poetry consists in making patterns out of language, the substantial and vital function of poetry will be analogous; it will be to make patterns out of life.

And this is the case. This is what poetry has been doing from its earliest days and is doing still. This is what it will always continue to do, and what insures its progress and its immortality. So long as the instinct to make patterns out of life endures, so long as language is the means of giving shape to human thoughts and emotions and aspirations, so long will the making of poetry be a necessity, because through poetry alone can that instinct be satisfied. The poetry of the past is our inheritance, and it is priceless; but it is not enough. The poetry of each age must reinterpret and reincarnate life anew. Not the art which we inherit, but the art which we create, is our own art, the expression of our own life. Let me quote once more from Shelley.

"The language of poets," he says, "is vitally metaphorical; that is, it marks the before unapprehended relations of things, and perpetuates their apprehension, until the words which represent them become, through time, signs for portions or classes of thoughts instead of pictures of integral thoughts; and then, if no new poets should arise to create afresh the associations which have thus been disorganised, language will be dead to all the nobler purposes of human intercourse."

Thus we find that in periods when the vital creative energy of poetry has been at its lowest, the effective energy, the

effective appreciation, of existing poetry has also dwindled. The classics have survived; but they have lost their vital force, their vitalising influence, in the torpor of classicism. To the extent that poetry ceases to be a living art, to that extent the work of the older poets ceases to be living poetry and becomes like the contents of a museum. It is preserved, catalogued, annotated; but it remains living art only to the measure in which living artists keep in touch with it, reincarnate it, find in it kinship with their own instincts and impulse for their own inspiration, and can say in its presence, *Anch' io sono poeta.*[2]

If we pass in review the most notable things that poets or great thinkers have said of poetry, we shall find running through them and giving them substantial coherence this notion of the function of poetry being to make patterns out of life. Sometimes it is distinctly expressed, more often suggested or implied. This is what is implied in Sidney's quaint words when he says in the *Apology for Poetry*, still harking back, you will notice, on the old confusion of technique with substance: "It is not riming and versing that maketh a poet, but fayning notable images of vertues, vices, or what else, which must be the right describing note to know a poet by." This is what underlies the vivid Platonic metaphor of a seventeenth-century author when he speaks of poetry as being "the dreams of them that are awake." This is the central thought in the striking words of Shelley. "A poem is the very image of life expressed in its eternal truth," and again, "Poetry is a mirror which makes beautiful that which is distorted"—which brings out the pattern in life, that is to say; a pattern that is there, though it is confused, broken, or hidden until poetry disengages it. The same thought is expressed with great beauty by Carlyle in his *Lectures on Heroes*, and it is worth while setting the words beside Shelley's and noticing how nearly two minds so

[2] I also am a poet.

different as theirs approached one another. "It is a man's sincerity and depth of vision," says Carlyle, "that makes him a poet. See deep enough, and you see musically; the heart of Nature being everywhere music, if you can only reach it." We come still closer to the point, even down to the exact phrasing, in a celebrated sentence of Milton's: "A true poem, that is, a composition and pattern of the best and honourablest things." It is the last words of this sentence on which Milton is for the moment laying stress: the words "composition" and "pattern" fall from him as it were incidentally. But they are all the more significant for that: for in them we have Milton speaking as it were off his guard, not laying down any law or formulating any theory, still less confuting any other view, but saying quite simply and instinctively what lay at the foundation of his own thought and guided his own practice. It would be tedious to multiply quotations further; and I have singled out these few *ad narrandum non ad probandum*.[3] It is not the office of a Professor of Poetry, as I conceive it, to lay down laws about poetry, or to argue about poetry, but to present poetry, and so far as he can, to present it as it really is. His privilege is to do for poetry something faintly analogous, on its lower plane, to what poetry itself does for life.

Let me then recur to two passages which I have already quoted in part, and quote them once more in full: for they are among the most considered and authentic utterances that poets have given about their own art; and they will bear repeating; for they must be thought out and thought over before they will yield their full significance.

"Poetry," said Shelley, "lifts the veil from the hidden beauty of the world, and makes familiar objects be as if they were not familiar."

"All art," says Mr. Yeats, "is in the last analysis an endeavour to condense as out of the flying vapours of the world

[3] For example not for proof.

an image of human perfection, and for its own and not for the art's sake."

To lift the veil from the hidden beauty of poetry and make familiar poems be as if they were not familiar is the highest aim and function of poetical criticism or exposition. For our own and not for the art's sake, I have endeavoured here to condense, out of the flying vapours of definitions, an image of poetry.

POETRY, OLD AND NEW*

By Alfred Noyes

(Poet, teacher, editor, and essayist, Alfred Noyes has been one of the most prominent English men of letters for the past quarter century. He has lectured in America, and was Professor of Modern English Literature in Princeton University. This article presents the conservative attitude toward some questions of technique and the "new poetry.")

The phrase is not of my choosing; and if it implies a breach of continuity it is wrong. There is neither new nor old poetry. There is only poetry. We may compare the poetry of one period with that of another if we choose, but these divisions are arbitrary, for the lines can be drawn anywhere, and it is the peculiar glory of true poetry in all ages that it is perennially vital. This is not a mere figure of speech. It is not merely a sounding phrase to say that poetry lives on while the Caesars and their dynasties pass into oblivion. It is one of the illuminating facts of history, one of the most radiant illustrations of the power of the human spirit. The song of Homer is alive to-day, while the world in which it was created has vanished. Passages of Vergil still move us, like the cry of a living voice, with their poignant sense of the tears in mortal things, while the Rome of which in his lifetime he was merely a "patriotic poet" has left her most august memory to his keeping. The

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song of Dante lives in the minds of men to-day—his laurelled head, even, being familiar where the mediaeval potentates are forgotten; and from our own Elizabethan age all that is now alive is the supreme voice that said of a king—

"After life's fitful fever he sleeps well."

Even in a generation much nearer to our own, how familiar, in comparison with others, are the voices of Wordsworth, Shelley, and Keats; Keats, who went to his death not knowing whether the world had heard him, or would ever hear. I always think that a line in his "Ode to the Nightingale," telling how he groped through that darkness of a summer's night, spellbound by the song in his own heart, describes with unconscious pathos his own inability to see his approaching fame; a line full of the hushed wonder of a poet on his way to death and immortality:

"I cannot see what flowers are at my feet."

The whole ode, in fact, might be addressed to the Spirit of Poetry, "Sappho singing in the Nightingale," the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. From the earliest to the latest, the poets are all members of a single body, the body of European poetry, militant here on earth; all vitally connected with a great European tradition, as the leaves and branches are connected with the tree that bore them, the living Igdrasil of Song.

The very meter used by Homer had its influence upon a great modern poet like Goethe—I use the word "modern" here, of course, for something larger than what the heathen call the "output" of the last decade. It had also, perhaps, its indirect influence even on a poet like Whitman when—though somewhat barbarously—he echoes its music in such lines, for instance, as

"I open my scuttle at night, and see the far-sprinkled systems."

For three thousand years there has been a vital continuity; and moreover, though poetry has never been adequately defined, there has been a continuity of idea in the minds of all nations with regard to the characteristics that differentiate poetry from prose. The essential element, the element that differentiates poetry from prose, has been the musical element, the element of Song. I use the word "Song" here as it would be understood by the Muse that Homer invoked. Vergil *sings* his great story of Æneas; and Dante takes Vergil as his guide. Milton, the greatest master of all the harmonies of our tongue, using that glorious measure of English blank verse, was at one with them:

> "Of man's first disobedience and the fruit
> Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste
> Brought death into the world and all our woe. . . .
> *Sing, heavenly Muse.*"

The facts are quite clear when one considers what may be called the great works of pure poetry, whether it be lyrical (when the very name implies its music) or epic or dramatic, as in Æschylus and Sophocles. It is a great rhythmical art, and whether its music be that of the lyre, or the measured cadence of a single human voice, or a choric chant, it is always *song*, as its various Muses understood that word. Shakespeare, of course, has complicated the matter a little for the unintelligent, because he used all the resources both of verse and prose in his poetic dramas, and there are also connecting passages of careless recitative in which he was not greatly interested. But, broadly speaking, whenever Shakespeare exercised his full power as a poet, whenever the great moments arrive, they arrive in music, a music that seems to be dictated by the very pulse of life; a music as precise in its rhythmical law as the movement of the tides and the stars or the beating of the human heart; so that his words have a universal significance, acquire the majesty of a

natural and inevitable process, and it seems as if the Eternal were speaking through his lips:

> "To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,
> Creeps in this petty pace from day to day
> To the last syllable of recorded time."

How the metrical movement of that last line reinforces the thought, and how absolutely natural is its stress! Its pulse is precise as that of the heart, and as living and responsive to emotion; yet, if you try to scan it (in the way that some writers of "free verse" seem to think that verse must be scanned), it defies analysis, defies your metronome in the very perfection of its law. It has found, in service to law, its perfect freedom. The thing said could not be said better, could not be said more naturally, could not be said more powerfully. It is like the rhythm of an athlete which enables him to use every ounce of his strength in the most effective way. One has only to compare two runners, two boxers, two crews on the river, or even two dancers, to discover the efficiency of rhythm; and if you repeat this line to yourself and try to get the utmost value out of its cadence, you will discover that the run of unaccented syllables at the beginning and in the middle, the stresses on the third and fourth syllable, on the long vowel sound in "recorded," and the final word, are a means of extracting infinitely more than the words could be combined to convey in any other form. It is for just this reason that the lines are immortal.

Or if one considers those miraculous lyrics of Shakespeare, one finds him often using the very simplest words, words of every day; and yet by the pure music of their combination, by those undertones of universal music which deepen them and quicken them when they begin to obey his rhythmical law and find their larger freedom, he fills them with the subtlest ecstasy that was ever breathed through articulate language:

"Nothing of him that doth fade
But doth suffer a sea-change
Into something rich and strange."

Even the author of *The Ring and the Book* (perplexed as he was about his own technique), whenever his spirit opened its wings and mounted into the clear air of poetry, expressed himself in pure song. The invocation in the first part of that strange turbid epic of Italy is a perfect example of this, and of his lineal descent:

"O lyric love, half angel and half bird,
And all a wonder and a wild desire,
Boldest of hearts that ever braved the sun,
Took sanctuary within the holier blue,
And sang a kindred soul out to his face. . . .
This is the same voice: can thy soul know change
Hail, then, and hearken from the realms of help!
Never may I commence my song, my due
To God who best taught song by gift of thee,
Except with bent head and beseeching hand. . . ."

And, yet again, the subtlest artist in poetry of the nineteenth century, the Vergil of England, in his great salute across the centuries to the Tennyson of Rome, reaffirms the unity of the whole body of European poetry as a rhythmical art, practised by a great guild of song:

"Roman Vergil, thou that singest
Ilion's lofty temples robed in fire,
Ilion falling, Rome arising,
Wars and filial faith and Dido's pyre. . . .

"I salute thee, Mantovano,
I that loved thee since my day began,
Wielder of the stateliest measure
Ever moulded by the lips of man."

Finally, the nearest approach to a definition of poetry on its technical side was made by Edgar Allan Poe, when he said that it was the "rhythmical creation of beauty."

During the last few years, however, there has been a tendency to break down the distinctive meanings of our terms. We have to face the fact that there are very large numbers of readers who have no ear for the music of poetry; and that they have been endeavoring to persuade themselves and the world that the true poetry is really something quite different. One recent critic has even declared that poetry "must be rid of its music." We have reached the point when, if any writer of realistic descriptions chose to cut his work up into lines of odd or even length and print it so that it looked like what is called "free verse" (I am not for the moment criticizing "free verse"), a large part of the English Press would call it Mr. Jargon's new poem; and if it dealt with particularly ugly or dirty details, it would be called Mr. Jargon's *great* new poem, and described as a work of poetical genius. Very many more readers than ever before, in fact, are now reading badly disguised prose without knowing it, and doing so in the firm belief that now, at last, in one brief decade, the vital continuity of three thousand years has been broken and superseded, and now, at last, they are enjoying the new and the only true poetry. The matter is complicated by the fact that the work *may* be, in some other respects, masterly; that it may even, in the wider sense, possess something of that poetry which is the substance of all the arts, and is, of course, the substance of some of our greatest prose. But (whether it be a prose masterpiece marred or merely the late Mr. Jack London rehashed in clumsy verse), if it rightly belongs to the prose category, and if, because it is divided into more or less regular lengths of line, or because a number of awkward rhymes are introduced, it is thrust into the category of *Song*, then we are confusing our terms, confusing values in litera-

ture, and marring the peculiar beauties both of prose and of poetry.

If the new generation insists on this confusion of terms we must accept it, and find a new name for what has been called poetry for the last three thousand years. Its readers may still be as few as Milton found, but there will always be room in the many mansions of literature for the poetry that is song, the poetry that has an inner pulse of music, that is born in music, and can never be made by merely taking thought, though it is itself the very music of thought —thought caught up into the universal harmony as a violinist is caught up by the surrounding orchestra and swept into accord with it. That is how a very clear-thinking man of science once described the work of Swinburne; and, although it is by no means always true of Swinburne, it is true often enough to place him among the great singers.

But I cannot see any good ground for invading the realm of one art with work which properly belongs to another. In fact, this breaking down of the categories is part of the same movement which is breaking down the distinctions in words themselves, obliterating their finer shades of meaning, and turning a highly organized and exquisitely developed language into what Herbert Spencer would have called an "incoherent homogeneity" and what, for present purposes, we may ourselves call a "sloppy mess." Only a few weeks ago a book of new poetry was sent to me, the novelty of which was that it had no punctuation. The author explained in a preface, quite seriously, that he regarded punctuation, capital letters, and the division of sentences as a relic of mediaeval tyranny. He desired to be free, and his method of achieving freedom was to lock himself up in a mad-house cell and throw the key through the window. All the differentiation of parts, all the organization of language, was destroyed, and while some of the book was unintentionally funny (through the running of one sentence into another and

the impossibility of deciding whether one of his characters merely sat down and ate, or whether he sat down and ate a large log of wood), the greater part was quite unintelligible bosh. I wanted to send the author a letter of thanks consisting entirely of punctuation marks without words; but the inspiration came and went and could not be recaptured.

This, of course, is an extreme case; but one may suggest that preoccupation with a desire for novelty defeats its own end. We can draw a distinction between the right way of achieving novelty in poetry and the wrong way. Nobody wants mere repetition of the past, of course. That is elementary; and it need not be discussed here. But it is not a new achievement in flying to cut off our wings; nor is it a new achievement in poetry to break those laws of song which have remained constant from Homer to the present day, and are, in fact, natural laws of harmony, order, and proportion. The true line of progress is development. We are not at the end of metrical invention. We are only at the beginning of it, even in its simplest forms. Newness is not achieved by the very simple method of doing the opposite of what was done by the past. A great deal of the so-called new work to-day simply takes an older method and makes it easier by evading one or two technical difficulties. It will take the meter of Gray's "Elegy," for instance, and abandon, first of all, that wonderful balance of the cadences that makes it sound like a moving sea. One can imagine very good reasons for this; but I am chiefly impressed by the fact that in most cases it is easier. Then, the new writer will perhaps evade the difficulty of finding a rhyme for the first and third lines. There may be good reasons for this too; but again I am chiefly impressed by the fact that it is easier. Thirdly, the new writer will hunt for startling, sensational, and violent words. He will pour the new wine of Jack London into clumsily handled old forms of verse. He will sometimes, even when speaking in

his own character, adopt the crudities of thought, and even the grammatical crudities, of slack minds; and one may imagine all kinds of good reasons for this, but again I am chiefly impressed by the fact that it is easier to do this than to write with a sense of all the hidden meanings and finer shades and subtle tones of the incomparable language that was used by Shelley, Keats, Wordsworth, and Tennyson. We do not want it to be coarsened or blunted; we want it to be touched to new and finer results. We want to develop and amplify it until its range can encompass our growing world and translate it anew into music.

It is sometimes said that we are at the end of metrical invention, and this is made an excuse for indifference to the musical element of poetry. I believe we are only at the beginning of metrical invention, even in its simplest forms, and that no poet has really much excuse for writing to-day unless in everything that he writes he is adding a little to the range of our music. Immediately after the great outburst of new music in Tennyson, Browning, and Swinburne, a poet of quite a different order, Robert Louis Stevenson, who has never been counted among the highly original poets, was able to give us quite original verse-movements like that of his beautiful poem beginning,

"In the highlands, in the country places."

His short book of poems is full of these exquisite snatches of song, in forms that have never been used before or since. They have never even been recognized as new by those amazing apostles of novelty who, when they do not abandon all the laws of verse, are usually to be found writing clumsy sonnets, putting crude thought and crude words into the oldest and most conventional patterns of English verse, and claiming that their clumsiness and crudity are evidences of their austere superiority to the flawless music that one finds not only in Tennyson, but in Dante, and in

all the true poets from Sappho to Verlaine and from Æschylus to Victor Hugo. The new way, the new glory of song, is opening out on every hand, and they are unaware of it, because they are not listening for music; they are searching for something else. Very often they seem to be taking the advice of an American critic and trying to popularize Keats by translating him into Billingsgate:

"St. Hagnes Heave, 'ow blistering chill it was."

To be preoccupied with the desire for novelty kills sincerity and silences that spontaneous music which the poets have heard in quiet hours. As Hazlitt pointed out, Milton's view of poetry was expressed in the phrase—"thoughts that *voluntary* move harmonious numbers." To be preoccupied with the desire for mere novelty is not to think, but "to make thoughts one's aim"; it is to see nature not as it really is, but with a distorted eye, wondering to what use of personal interest or ambition or sensation with the crowd it may be twisted again. The simplest note of natural song is worth more than all the self-conscious attempts to be subtle and new by the use of what has been aptly called the "scarlet word." Nothing is so superficial as mere literary sophistication. But that other note, the natural note of song, is, in the last analysis, the most subtle and the most profound, for it is at one with Nature herself. Even in its artistry, when it evolves any beautiful form it does so along the lines of natural law as nature unfolds a flower; and in its most exalted works, though its music may be above the range of ordinary human speech, it is still natural music, the apotheosis of human speech, the thing said as we would like to say it, if only we could.

But it is not by taking thought that a man can write the *Songs of Innocence*, or those greater poems in which the footsteps of love are heard approaching through the night of time, poems in which every line is a little journey to

the world's end, and every rhyme a lovers' meeting in the kingdom beyond the world. Song, and song only, holds the secret of these.

"O mistress mine, where are you roaming,
O, stay and hear, your true love's coming
That can sing both high and low.
Trip no further, pretty sweeting,
Journeys end in lovers' meeting,
Every wise man's son doth know."

THE WORLD, THE WORD AND THE POET*

By Irwin Edman

(Irwin Edman is the author of a number of books, including *Richard Cane Looks at Life, Poems*, and *The World, the Arts and the Artist*, from which this selection has been made. The author, here, discusses something of poetic technique, the evocative quality of the poet's words, and the magic and loveliness of poetry.)

The art of poetry is more specifically an art where the medium of language is itself in the foreground, and where not the poet nor his hearer nor his reader ever quite forget the language in what is being said. The poet is, as Santayana somewhere says, elementally a goldsmith in words. He arrests the attention of the reader as he is himself arrested by the sensuous qualities of the sound of words. One thinks indeed at times that it is almost a special concession to a poet, for example, to be born to the Italian language. It is, one almost imagines, impossible not to be a poet in a language where one can hardly ask the time or order a meal, save in a liquid cascade of vowels. There are lines of Shakespeare one remembers not least because the syllables melt mellifluously in one's mouth, "Bare ruined choirs, where late the

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sweet birds sang." Poets like Swinburne, seduced by the musically euphonious possibilities of sounds themselves, sometimes do not refrain from writing what is almost nonsense for the beautiful succession of sounds the nonsense makes.

It would be possible to conceive an art of poetry that should be an abstract architecture of exquisitely chosen vowel and consonant sounds, as meaningless and absorbing as the colors in an Oriental tapestry. There are poets, as there are readers, whose ears have this preternatural sensitiveness, for whom the color of a sound has the same seduction that the color of a leaf or a lake has for more visually minded persons. "Cellar door," remarked a foreigner who had no knowledge of the meaning of English words, "is the most beautiful word I have heard in the English language." There are English poets who would have understood what he meant.

But the filigree work in words is obviously not the whole of a poet's function. An artful arrangement of consonants and sounds is clearly not the whole of the poetic effect. It is not the whole even of the sensuous effect of poetry. For language resembles music in another way than simply in the fact that its syllables are like the separate tones of music. Just as separate tones do not constitute music, separate syllables, however liquid or chiseled, do not constitute poetry. The human voice has inevitably a rhythmic beat, and all language is inescapably cadenced. It is the cadences of a language, as well as its separate syllables that a poet exploits among the physical resources of his art.

The rhythm of poetry may perhaps be defined as its special instrument of hypnosis. There are profound reasons, lying in the physiological nature of life itself, in the beat of the heart, in the very act of breathing, why the human imagination as well as the human ear should be so susceptible to the effects of rhythm. In music, these effects are

explicit and obvious; in poetry they constitute the special imaginative atmosphere, so to put it, in which the poet throws the reader, in which what the poet has to say is said. A poem is a dream or mood, a large or little vision of experience, expressed with all the musical resources of which a poet is capable and with all the sudden revelation of "happy epithets," which is his special inventive gift.

But the large and loose rhythms of Walt Whitman, the tight and steely couplets of Pope, the languorous long lines of Swinburne, the organ sweep and crescendo of Milton's blank verse, quite apart from anything said or anything else in the manner of the saying, determine the effect and the appeal of the verse.

The basic movement of the rhythm, the total character of the dream, through the vehicle of exquisitely chosen sounds and incisively revealing epithets, constitute the poetic effect. But what does one mean by the poet's dream? Not a small share of the nature of poetic creation and appreciation are involved in the answer to that question. For a poem is more than its separate syllables, its rhythms, its words or its meaning that might be translated or explained. It is a total creation, an organism in itself, whose gestation is somewhere deep in the subconsciousness of the poet and whose being is that of a dream immortalized upon a page.

We know much too little to say by what alchemy or fermentation the thousand images, agonies, joys in a poet's memories become transmuted into the living whole that constitutes a finished poem. If we did know that, we should know the secret of many other kinds of genius beside that of the poetic. "Poetry," says Wordsworth, "is emotion recollected in tranquillity," and in so saying he indicated one quality of the total residual effect of any poem that is something more than verse. For the poem as a dream is a combination of images, insights and ideas fused into one whole through some unifying mood. The sonnet, "The world

is too much with us, late and soon," may be translated into an expository prose, an idea, a thesis. It tells us what many moralists have said less memorably, that the pressure of things and events and affairs corrupts that capacity for pagan joy in the fresh world about us that is our birthright. But the effect of the poem, and what might be called its life is not in the sentiment thus uttered, nor in the separate syllables added together. No transcript of it will do it justice or represent it. Its effect is the subtle communication of the poet's mood or dream, his synoptic vision revealed in our own consciousness. A bit of the world seen, a bit of life experienced, a personal sorrow or a universal joy are transformed in the alembic of the poet's being into something that is not simply a sonnet on a page but a living organism in eternity.

Now that total residual effect which makes the impression of something Platonic and eternal and living as over against any of the separate elements that enter into it, we have called the poet's dream. It is the communication of that dream that is his essential business. And for its communication, if any single element is to be thanked, it is that of rhythm. The word "hypnotic" has often been used about poetry, and we speak lightly of "poetic magic." Both the words are peculiarly apposite.

The magic may be said to lie in the evocative epithet, in that enumerative loveliness which is one of the chief charms of the poet's vocabulary. The hypnosis lies in that compulsion into which any rhythm throws the attention. We are attuned to a given mood, our life flows with the current of a given cadence. That is one reason among others why a poem leaves us with something more than can be summed up in its elements. We have shared for a moment in the life of that organic dream which is a poem. Its pulsebeat is one with our own. Any one, indeed, who has ever written poetry knows how a poem often begins in the mind as a kind

of cadence with a hardly specified meaning. Many a poem in the history of English literature has begun as a song without words that hummed itself in the poet's imagination and gradually took form and words and meaning. Any lover of poetry knows that below the particular sounds and specific meanings, what he loves and responds to is the "element of song in the singing, the numbers as they flow." The rhythm may be obvious and banal as in that verse that haunted Mark Twain, "a blue trip slip for a three cent fare," or may have all the subtle variation of the blank verse of Milton. But the basic heartbeat of poetry is gone where there is no singing; the words may be memorable or clever; they will not, unless they have the hypnosis of rhythm, sing themselves into the reader's heart and become, during that experience, his life.

The qualities, liquid and euphonious, the march and suasion of rhythm are not by themselves sufficient to account for the effect of poetry. For if poetry were simply tones and syllables and melodies of words, it would be a music limited by the sounds and combinations possible in a language and lacking that variety of individual sound and of multiple and complex harmony possible to music. Poetry may be, as certain poets have wished it to be, pure music, but such a music, compared with music itself, would be thin as well as pure. It needs no elaborate demonstration to show that poetry is composed of words and that words not only sound but speak. The significance of words can never quite be obliterated, and the poet would be wasting one of the chief resources of his art, if he neglected to exploit the specifically verbal quality of words.

Now a word has at once a logical intention and a psychological connotation. It is upon this duplicity that the poet's art partly depends. But the poet is interested in precisely the penumbra of words which it is the business of the scientist to neglect. It is the power, above all, not

the truth of words that is the poet's concern. A poet tries to render experience alive, whether it be sensations, his own moods, or those of other people, or ideas. The poet wishes to celebrate the world, to render its vividness and impact, to communicate what has awakened his senses, stirred his emotions or provoked his ideas. He chooses those words or those uses of words, therefore, that will induce in the reader a certain psychological state rather than merely communicate images, emotions and thoughts to him. "England" in a diplomatic code could be represented by the symbol X. But England in Shakespeare's descriptive phrase, "This seat of majesty, this earth of Mars, this demi-Eden, other-Paradise," is more than a logical character. It is a psychological provocative; it has all the magic and seduction of all the habits, childhood associations, racial memories that are in the imagination of a reader associated with the sound of the word. Words in poetry are not mathematical symbols but emotional provocatives. They speak not only *of* things but *to* the awakened spirit.

The poet is indeed chiefly engaged in awakening the torpid imagination, by the liquid loveliness of sounds, by the march of his verse, but not least by the evocative words he uses. Those evocations depend most simply on his choice of words that will break up our abstract and conventional formulas for experience into the sensuous elements in which experience comes to the fresh imagination of the child. He will fill his verse with the concrete and specific sensuous detail; he will enumerate the colors, smells, tastes and touches of that world which has become to the hurried and practical adult a routine. One of the most brilliant instances of this aspect of the poetic art is Rupert Brooke's "Great Lover," in which the effect is simply that of an exquisite commemorative reminder of those tense and tingling moments of sensation which in health and in youth we enjoy:

"These I have loved:
White plates and cups, clean-gleaming,
Ringed with blue lines; and feathery, faëry dust;
Wet roofs, beneath the lamp-light; the strong crust
Of friendly bread; and many-tasting food;
Rainbows; and the blue bitter smoke of wood;
And radiant raindrops crouching in cool flowers;
And flowers themselves, that sway through sunny hours,
Dreaming of moths that drink them under the moon;
Then, the cool kindliness of sheets, that soon
Smooth away trouble; and the rough male kiss
Of blankets; grainy wood; live hair that is
Shining and free; blue-massing clouds; the keen
Unpassioned beauty of a great machine;
The benison of hot water; furs to touch;
The good smell of old clothes; and other such—
The comfortable smell of friendly fingers,
Hair's fragrance, and the musty reek that lingers
About dead leaves and last year's ferns. . . .

Dear Names
And thousand other throng to me! Royal flames;
Sweet water's dimpling laugh from tap or spring;
Holes in the ground; and voices that do sing;
Voices in laughter, too; and body's pain,
Soon turned to peace; and the deep-panting train;
Firm sands; the little dulling edge of foam
That browns and dwindles as the wave goes home;
And washen stones, gay for an hour; the cold
Graveness of iron; most black earthen mould;
Sleep; and high places; footprints in the dew;
And oaks; and brown horse-chestnuts, glossy-new;
And new-peeled sticks; and shining pools on grass;—
All these have been my loves."[4]

[4] From "The Great Lover," in *The Collected Poems of Rupert Brooke*, Dodd, Mead and Company, 1923.

In order to achieve this function of sensuous celebration, the words a poet uses will be simple, sensuous and passionate, but above all sensuous. For poetry that leaves the senses cold will not address itself easily to the passions. But the sensuous celebration which is poetry is not attained simply by the use of sensuous words. Too many of these have become dulled and colorless through routine use. The poet startles us into fresh recognition by an unexpected and dazzling association. A sixteenth century poem on the Eucharist says:

"The modest water saw its God and blushed."

and that surprising association makes us see with greater sensuous vitality, the very act of the water turning into wine.

Books may and have been written on the use of simile and metaphor. The sense of the matter may be quite simply stated, however. Metaphor and simile are devices by which, through breaking up our routine associations and substituting novel ones, our experience becomes refreshed, vivid, and keen. But the use of metaphorical association is not simply to restore sensuous glory to things, but to give them life by associating them with our passions, our hopes, our fears, our traditions and desires. Or inversely, some emotion may be rendered suddenly living by giving it sensuous associations:

"My love is like a red, red rose,"

or

"Du bist wie eine Blume."[5]

Or again, Rupert Brooke in his magnificent sonnet called, "The Dead," tells us of the dead, first explicitly, in terms of the life and beauty, "flowers and furs and cheeks," they

[5] Thou art like a flower.

had touched and loved. Then without comment he says:

"There are waters blown by changing winds to laughter,
And lit by the rich skies all day and after,
Frost with a gesture stays the waves that dance,
And wandering loveliness; he leaves a white
Unbroken glory, a gathered radiance,
A width, a shining peace under the night."

The living are at once assimilated to all those gay and dancing waters we have seen by day; the dead to calm still waters we have seen in peace at night.

Metaphor and simile are the poet's rebellion against routine impressions. The moon ceases to be an unmeaning white disc and becomes "Queen of the Night." The sun is a young god driving his chariot across the sky. Beauty is "a candle clear in this dark country of the world thou seest." "The soul of Adonais like a star beacons from the abode where the eternal are."

Ultimately all language is metaphorical. No discourse can ever do more than suggest or symbolize in the most round-about fashion what is actually experienced. But by the choice of sensuously vivid words, by the association of our impressions with our passions or of our passions with our impressions, poetry comes nearer, perhaps, the heart of the matter than any other kind of language. It is for this reason that one cannot ever say exactly what a poem means or ever exactly or wholly translate it. As well try to render the taste of a pear or the feel of the skin of a peach against the skin. The music that gives a poem its atmospheric condition, the words that are its specific elements and give it its induplicable context, the metaphors that heighten the intensity of what is being actually suggested, all these are lost. The poem is the Word become flesh or perhaps better still the Flesh become Word. The world becomes translated into the Logos of the poet, and in that incarnation in a musical

and pictorial speech the World becomes real to the awakened and entranced reader.

The poet like a child loves the colors and shapes of things, and a whole anthology might be produced of poems that did nothing but in one way or another, "commemorate the rose."

But the poet, for all his child's freshness, is not a child. He has refinements of feeling, complexities of mood that no child could possibly experience, and it is part of his art to render moods and emotions alive and real and communicable and in something like the same way and by the same artifices by which he vivifies sensation. Poetry is often identified with sentiment, not to add sentimentality, because so much of the subject-matter of the world's lyrics is the expression of personal emotion. That the themes of poets should be recurrently birth and youth and the doomed beauty of things is simply enough to be attributed to the fact that poets are human and share characteristic human emotions. Their poems on these themes are vibrant and memorable, however, not because their themes are universal or commonplace, but because their expression, in each case unique, has rendered with immortal poignancy some cherished or inevitable human mood.

> "Oh, never say that I was false of heart
> When absence seemed my flame to qualify,
> As easy might I from myself depart,
> As from my soul which in thy breast doth lie."

Thousands of inarticulate men and women have felt that emotion about their beloved, but in that sonnet of Shakespeare's they find their common emotion rendered with uncommon and vitalizing felicity. A poem of love may teach them by its own instant and luminous reality what the reality of their own love is.

In the province of emotion indeed poetry is a more adequate discourse than any other form of utterance. What

in practical or logical contexts is negligible or distracting becomes central for the poet. Not the chemistry but the sparkle and glow of water, not the matter of solar distance but the fertile benediction of the sun concerns him. Those emotional overtones of contacts with things or humans that the scientist or man of affairs must as scientist or man of affairs ignore, the poet deliberately cultivates. Just as a poem sensuously dead is no poem, so is a poem devoid of passion. The incitement to the subject-matter of the passion may be very various; it may be the mysticism of Blake, the tortured amorousness of Donne, the love of God of Dante, the revolutionary or Platonic idealism of Shelley. But what starts that ferment of images and music which is the beginning of poetic creation is some intensity of living, some depths of passionate feeling which the poet wishes to utter, and, though he may not realize it, to share. Tolstoy in "What is Art" ranks sincerity very high as an aesthetic virtue. But Tolstoy's was a moral conception of sincerity. In purely aesthetic terms, too, sincerity is a virtue. Some ardor must infuse the poem, and the technique is concerned with devices that make that ardor relived by the reader. . . .

The art of prose takes us into a different realm at its periphery, though there is a common territory where it is difficult to distinguish its territory from that of poetry. At its extreme form, as has already been pointed out, prose is an art where the language *per se* is instrumental and incidental, where what is said is of incomparably more importance than the manner of its saying. At its extreme form, in other words, prose ceases to be an art at all, and is a bare means of communication. It is a system of practical signals, a telegraphy, or a system of economical formulas, a science.

At the poetic periphery of prose, it would be difficult to assign precisely the distinction between it and its sister art. Prose, too, has its purely linguistic and purely musical elements which no born writer or reader can fail to note or to

cherish. Prose, too, in a sensitive stylist, exploits, though not perhaps as showily, the beauties of mere vowels and consonants in juxtaposition. It has, likewise, its cadences, though they be freer and in some ways subtler than those of formal verse. Prose may indeed in essence be sometimes simply a less constricted kind of poetry. There are writers like Pater whom one reads for his phrases, De Quincey, for his images and rhythms, Ruskin for his purple patches. But they are, to many tastes, simply because they are ambiguous art, not the finest kind of prose writing.

Prose because of its variety and flexibility, the range of things which it can do, becomes the vehicle of an art in which the element of mere style is subsidiary. In a longer essay one would have to pause to consider the essay as that form in which ideas or moods receive a curiously personal almost lyrical expression, less eloquent than poetry, perhaps, but like a lyric it is a unique expression of an insight or an intuition in which the manner of saying makes half the meaning of what is said.

But as an instance of general aesthetic principles the novel offers a peculiarly interesting and central instance. For fiction is one of the clearest instances of pure creation and throws considerable illumination on what the whole imaginative process is. All experience, from the simplest apperception of an object, is a kind of fiction. We do not see things; we construct them from the random stimulations of impulse and habit. In more than a merely metaphorical sense, chairs and tables, trees and buildings, cabbages and kings, are the busy-work of our imagination. The flux of experience provides the data from which we construct the stable objects around us. Our conception, indeed, of a world, is itself a highly architectural fiction. Still more obviously though not more emphatically, is our knowledge of other people, even our most intimate friends, a fiction we spin, a loose-jointed novel we create from the fragmentary

data of our contacts with them, from the scattered rumors and gossip out of which we come to make the more or less stable fiction we call an acquaintance or a friend.

All our knowledge is a fictitious picture or an unwritten fiction. The novelist more deliberately marshals details into a background, events into a sequential history, actions and feelings and opinions into a character. The novelist creates a world as surely, more surely perhaps, than God created one. Tom Jones, David Copperfield, Anna Karenina have being, clearer and more incontestable, than those half realized persons, the people next door. More than that. Not only do these characters exist in their own worlds, but their own worlds exist. That Russian society in which Anna led her dazzling and tragic life is gone forever with the changes and chances of war and revolution. But its logic, its folkways, its goods and evils, are there forever. Tolstoy not only represented, but in his work created a civilization.

The great and simple appeal of fiction is that it enables us to share imaginatively in the fortunes of these created beings without paying the price in time or defeat for their triumphs and frustrations. One moves with them in lands where one has never been, experiences loves one has never known. And this entrance into lives wider and more various than our own in turn enables us more nicely to appreciate and more intensely to live the lives we do know. It is impossible to say how much novelists teach us to look at our fellow beings, at "their tragic divining of life upon their ways." The novelist is, in one sense, your true philosopher. For any marshaling of people into a story implies a conception of fate, and a philosophy of nature. The least obviously philosophical of novelists, in the choice he makes of events, in the construction he makes of circumstances indicates and implies what the world, his world is like. Where a novelist, like some of those in our own day, Hardy and Anatole France and Thomas Mann are philosophers, they are so

in a more rich and living sense than the philosophers of the academy. They imply themselves or express through their characters a total appraisal of existence. They document their estimates with the whole panorama of human experience. They not only judge but create a world. It is difficult to find in current philosophy a universe more complete and comprehensive than that of a novelist whose mind has ranged over eternity and whose eyes and imagination have traveled widely in time.

CHAPTER 8

LITERARY STANDARDS

> Jove,
> When on my three-foot stoole I sit, and tell
> The warlike feats I have done, his spirits flye out
> Into my Story: say thus mine Enemy fell,
> And thus I set my foote on's necke, even then
> The Princely blood flowes in his Cheeke, he sweats,
> Strains his yung Nerves, and puts himself in posture
> That acts my words.
>
> —SHAKESPEARE, *Cymbeline*

Children and primitive people enjoy their literature without reflection. They give themselves to the emotional suggestion, and realize the life presented in the story with all the intensity of the young Prince in the quotation from Cymbeline above. This imaginative re-living of the story is the fundamental fact in all appreciation of literature. Without it no judgments are valid.

As the race developed and its mental processes became more complex, "the unexamined life" ceased to be satisfying. Uncritical emotional response to story, to ceremonial, to patriotic appeal often led to unsatisfactory eventualities,—to debauchery, to religious frenzy, to mobs and violence. As more and more of life came under the purview of analysis, and submitted to some semblance of reasoned control, the literary life was no exception. So arose literary criticism, its purpose being the control of a vital type of human activity for the benefit of the individual and of society.

CRITICISM AND CREATION

Some one, I think Kipling, tells the story of a great battle in which one tribe gloriously defeated an enemy of long

standing. That night, at the feast in celebration of the victory, the leader of the tribe was vastly proud of himself and arose to tell of his part in the battle, but, not being gifted with the just word, he became confused and sat down in shame. Other leaders tried to tell of their exploits with similar results. Then arose a man gifted with words and recounted the glorious deeds of all the warriors so that they re-lived the adventures of the day with much joy. Some one remembered, however, that the man who had recounted so vividly the events of the battle was not a warrior, had not been in the battle at all but up a tree in the rear watching. They thought that one who was not a warrior and who still could tell so vividly what the warrior did and felt must be in league with the powers of darkness, so they took him out and hanged him. And that was the beginning of literary criticism!

Ever since that hypothetical event, it has been assumed by many that there is a necessary and fundamental antagonism between the critic and the artist. Always those who seek to exploit human emotions for the sake of their own emotional, social, or economic satisfactions have resented any effort at control for the general good. Even the most conscientious writer, in moments of successful composition, feels himself the complete master of his materials. He experiences the joy of creative thinking. He resents any effort of the critic later to evaluate his work on a basis other than that of his own pleasurable emotion. He is thoroughly convinced that the mind of the critic works on a lower plane. In his own mind, creative writing is set over against critical writing, and is infinitely superior to it.

At a time when the mind of man was supposed to be made up of "faculties" which worked independently of each other, it seemed plausible to rank those faculties in some order of precedence, and the "creative faculty" was usually ranked higher than the "critical faculty." We understand

today that a man does not use one faculty when he writes criticism and another when he writes poetry. We know that all significant thinking is creative. The opposition is not between critical thought and creative thought, but between analysis and synthesis, between discursive thinking and imaginative thinking. The thinking of the critic results in an analysis, a new evaluation of the elements out of which the effect of the poem is achieved; the thinking of the poet results in a synthesis of experience, a new interpretive form given to some phase of life. The two processes can be distinguished logically, but they are both parts of any successful accomplishment, either in the field of criticism or in that of art.

The doctrine of the superiority of creative work over critical, a doctrine inherited from the old faculty psychology, is infinitely flattering to the poet. Even today, when we pride ourselves upon our emancipation from inherited standards, many writers hug to themselves this flattering illusion. But the great artist must be a severe critic of his own work and of that of other artists. Without criticism there can be no assured progress. If you play a bit of music on the piano, you listen to it and observe what is lacking in tempo, accent, rhythm, etc. Only in so far as your critical analysis of one effort is effective will the next effort show improvement. The fact that we can study the work of a writer and that we can note various evidences of his development is definite proof that he has exercised his critical powers effectively.

Even when the critic is not a producer of imaginative literature, it does not follow that he is a less subtle or a less creative writer. Many a basketball coach can train men to do on the floor what the coach himself cannot do. Many a team of brilliant players has failed to win because of inadequate critical attention to the strategy of the game. A given critic may be a man of greater creative ability than

a given poet. The relation of the poet to the critic in this case is much like the relation of the child who has had a lovely time drawing the picture of a beautiful horse on the piano with a nail, in the presence of a parent who brings to bear on the situation a more complicated standard of judgment—a judgment not based upon the perfectly satisfactory quality of the emotion accompanying the child's esthetic endeavors.

Kinds of Criticism

Perhaps the most important type of literary criticism is that which seeks to find an adequate basis for literary judgments through the analysis of the nature and functions of literature as a way of thinking about life—philosophical criticism. The purpose of the materials presented in Part III of this text is to start student thinking on these fundamental principles of literary criticisms.

Some of the principles which may be deduced, and which should be elaborated through much systematic reading in connection with this course and later, may be stated as follows:

1. Literature is a universal mode of thought, characteristic of man in all times and in all stages of development.

2. This type of thinking cannot be developed aside from its objectification in some oral or written form which serves as a necessary symbol, much as the word is a necessary symbol in our simpler kinds of thinking.

3. The purpose of this type of thinking is to make experience more intense and more meaningful.

4. Literary cultivation must proceed (a) through efforts at creative writing, and (b) through the appropriation of the values to be found in the writings of others.

5. The literary value of a poem, novel, drama, is always personal; i.e., it is to be found only in the value of the experience to the individual hearer or reader.

6. The intensity of the experience of the reader of a bit of literature depends upon a number of things; for instance, (a) his mood at the time of reading, (b) his familiarity or lack of familiarity with the symbols used, (c) his habit or absence of habit of imaginative interpretation, (d) his past experiences, (e) the pertinence of the materials presented to his own problems, etc.

7. From the nature and purpose of literature, esthetic values are necessarily shifting, and the significance of any given bit of literature may vary from age to age, from race to race, and from individual to individual.

8. These personal reactions to literature are so intimately tied up with the development of our attitudes toward ourselves and our environment that it is impossible, finally, to evaluate literature without consideration of its moral implications.

There are many types of what may be called applied literary criticism. (1) *Judicial* criticism attempts to pass judgment upon a bit of literature, to relate it to standards of technique or of purpose. (2) *Inductive* criticism aims to collect the facts with reference to a work of art, its methods, its relation to the times in which it was produced, etc., and to set them in order and describe them. (3) *Impressionistic* criticism recounts the writer's exeriences with the literature being considered. If the critic is sensitive to literary effects, if he is widely read and a skilful writer, impressionistic criticism may mediate between a bit of literature and a less experienced reader in much the same manner as a painting may mediate between a bit of nature scenery and a beholder. (4) *Historical* criticism may follow the fortunes of a literary

form, or survey the literary activity of a historic period, or place an author in his group and show his relation to it, etc.

It is evident that many other types of literary criticism might be distinguished if it were desirable. Just at present there is a somewhat vociferous school of literary criticism which maintains that the sole function of the critic is to find the aim of the writer of a book, and to evaluate the means employed to attain that aim. According to this theory, the critic must have no pre-judgments as to the worth of the writer's purpose; he must confine himself to a description of the techniques employed. This attitude arose, perhaps, as a wholesome reaction against the habit of criticising a book because it was not what the writer never intended it to be, of criticising a vase because it was not a bathtub, or a sonnet because it was not a sermon. But the critic who confines himself to this attitude toward literature finds himself in much the same position as the policeman who might consider it to be his sole duty to investigate the purpose of the gangster, and to determine whether he used the approved techniques in his activities. This philosophy of criticism, though it assumes to be peculiarly modern, really derives from an outmoded psychology and the theory of the superiority of the creative writer to the critic.

The following articles are examples of literary criticism. For the most part, the writers are concerned with the general principles upon which any standards for the judgment of literary values must be erected. They discuss general literary values rather than matters of technique, which might be of special interest to writers, but not of so great interest to the general reader. They give intelligent basis for thinking about the much-discussed relation of literature to moral values. Such judgments upon individual books as appear are clearly based upon well established general principles.

READING*

By Frank Luther Mott

(Frank Luther Mott is Professor and Director of the School of Journalism in the University of Iowa, and editor of *The Midland.* This extract is taken from the Introduction to *Rewards of Reading.* Students will find the entire book to be profitable reading.)

And now let me give six pieces of specific advice upon your reading:

First, read with full sympathy, casting out prejudices (which, etymologically, are pre-judgments) and giving yourselves up wholly to the will of the writer. You must *feel* him, *know* him. "When I am reading a book," said Dean Swift, "whether wise or silly, it seems to be alive and talking to me." There was a man who had the art of reading.

Second, do not worry too much about allusions you do not understand, or pay too much attention to notes and the commentary of scholars. This writing is for you: do not let some pedant step between you and your friend the writer.

Third, read aloud as much as possible. Your roommate, your wife, your sweetheart, your best friend will probably be glad to listen to you: if not, bribery or duress of whatever sort will be excusable. You will be surprised to find how much more pleasure you get from reading by sharing it. Moreover, reading aloud is a valuable aid to interpretation. Hardress O'Grady, an English teacher of speech, in a little book called *Reading Aloud*, after pointing out how much attention writers give to the sound of their words and phrases, urges the reader to do his part as thoroughly. "First by taking in with his eyes the written word, next by saying aloud the sounds that compose the words and the

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rhythms of the sentences, he will, in inverse order, put himself in the same place as the author; he will be imitating those mechanical actions which were the concrete translation of the author's innermost being."

Fourth, re-read the parts you like best. You will discover new meanings, new beauties, each time you go over a great book, and it will become more and more your own.

Fifth, if the volume you are reading is your own, do not hesitate to mark in the margin the passages that appeal to you. My reason for giving this counsel may be briefly stated thus: You are collaborating with the writer when you read his book. Your experiences, ideas, and feelings join with his in producing the total effect of the book. Now, if you mark the book, you are leaving an actual physical record of that collaboration; you have stamped the book as your own in a visible way. I hope you will own many of the books you read, and that you will stamp them with evidence of your ownership of them.

Sixth, and last, think back. Consider what you have read in the light of the whole. Discuss it with your reading partner, or with whomever you can get to listen. As to notes on your reading, do not make them if they seem onerous to you. Some people, however, find making a few notes enlightening and helpful. The flyleaves of the book are a good place. There is nothing sacred about the physical book: it is for use. For myself, I like to write something about a book after I have finished it, a little essay or review. It serves to fix my ideas about it, to make it more a part of myself and of my own background.

And after all, that is what books are for; to enlarge ourselves, to make us find ourselves. When John Neihardt set out on his trip down the Missouri in an open boat, a friend said to him mockingly, "What do you expect to find?" "Some more of myself," he answered. That is precisely what we are seeking as we set out upon this expedition—

this picnic excursion, if you wish—into the world of books. What do we expect to find? *Some more of ourselves.*

CREATIVE READING*

By Carl Van Doren

(As professor at Columbia University, as literary editor of *The Nation* and *The Century Magazine*, as managing editor of *The Cambridge History of American Literature*, and as editor of the Literary Guild since 1926, Carl Van Doren has been closely connected with literary development in America for two decades. This extract from *The Roving Critic* may suggest an answer to the contention of Schopenhauer that reading is "thinking with someone else's head." It is pertinent here because "creative reading" is one kind of literary criticism.)

As surely as there is such a thing as creative writing there is such a thing as creative reading. That it is not very common appears from the universal demand for fiction, in which the creative process has already been applied to the material in hand, so that the reader is called upon to contribute very little himself. Indeed, if the writer of fiction is strong enough he can carry his more compliant readers to almost any distance from the world of their experience and can persuade them to accept as its equal or as its superior some merely invented region. To go so far with a romancer is not, as is often thought, a necessary sign that the reader is imaginative: he may be only limp or uncritical, unable to hold his own in the presence of a more powerful fancy. Children are regularly beguiled in this fashion, as are the credulous of all ages by travellers and politicians and priests who have a romantic turn of mind. The creative reader, however, begins to build the minute he begins to read. In varying degrees, of course, he leans upon his writer, but he

*Reprinted from *The Roving Critic*, by Carl Van Doren, by and with permission of, and special arrangement with, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., authorized publishers, 1923.

takes profit from his book in proportion to the amount of creative energy he puts into it. Perhaps the simplest illustration of this is to be noted in the fact that one reads a book with different results at different times. A reader, for instance, who has never been in love cannot find in a play or poem, a novel or biography portraying the effects of love, more than a fraction of what he would find there if he had genuinely known the passion. Another who has thought the history of some foreign country dull may discover that it is fascinating after he has visited that country. And still another may suddenly perceive a large pertinence in ideas or speculations which heretofore have left him cold: he has in his own person caught up with them, and now greets them heartily for the first time though they have been there in the book all the time.

The notion that unhappy men and women employ reading as an anodyne is not quite accurate. With them reading furnishes more than a substitute for thought; it furnishes them the occasion to set going in their minds a dance of images, a sequence of ideas, a march of memories which run parallel to the matter of the book, and to which the book, indeed, may be but the exciting cause. Neither is it quite accurate to say that inveterate readers, happy or unhappy, lead their lives within the pages of this volume or that for want of the more robust outlet which action affords those who do not care to read, or at least to read so much. Rather, such readers may be full of creative impulses which they prefer to exercise in a purer and more plastic universe than they have found elsewhere. There happens to be no standard by which to measure the relative value of the forces which are released by action and of those which are released by contemplation. If the man of action is associated in his career with other active persons, why may not the man of contemplation be equally associated in his with others whose society he enjoys through the medium of

printed words? As there are men of action who drive blindly forward, without thought, to some goal which they hardly see though their instincts urge them in that general direction, so there are men of contemplation who drift with the tide of some—or any—poet or historian or philosopher without critical resistance; but the creative reader challenges, disputes, denies, fights his way through his book, and he emerges to some extent always another person. He has been a creator while he seemed to be merely passive and recipient.

To take another easy illustration, a scholar engaged in actual research may wade through rivers and climb mountains of books while in the pursuit of proofs for his thesis, and may yet at every step be full of creative fire, throwing aside what he does not need and choosing what he does as emphatically as if he were a soldier on the most difficult campaign. The researcher is but a common type of creative reader, his process and his aim being more readily comprehensible than those of the other types but not essentially unlike them. All creative readers have at any given moment some conscious or unconscious thesis which they are seeking to prove, some conscious or unconscious picture they desire to complete, some conscious or unconscious point they mean to reach if they can. By it they are sustained through what would be unendurable labour to another, or even to them at an earlier or a later day. It gives them resoluteness, it gives them form. More potent than has been ordinarily recognized, it belongs with that faculty whereby the mind arranges its impressions in some sort of order and comes to some kind of conclusion without always consulting the will or even inviting the consciousness to be aware of what is going on.

The token by which the creative reader can best be known is his lack of the pedantic expectation with which many readers of considerable taste begin to read. For instance,

there was that professorial critic, for whom no pillory can be too high or naked or windy, who declared he could not approve of *The Playboy of the Western World* because it was neither tragedy nor comedy nor tragi-comedy. He did not create as he read; he could not even follow a free representation of human life; he was tied brain and mood to a prejudice which shut him in from any liberation by novel wit or beauty. Like many better men, he was a victim of an obsession for the classics into which creative readers never allow themselves to fall. They may have formed their literary principles upon the strictest canon and they may be richly responsive to the great traditions of style and structure; but they have not been made timid by their training and they know that the heartiest reader, like the heartiest spectator of human affairs, must occasionally have his fling outside narrow circles or must begin to stifle. It is as snobbish to feel at home only among the "best" books as to feel at home only among the "best" people. After all, the best books have been made up out of diverse elements, transmuted by some creative spirit from the raw materials which lay around. The reader who in some degree can share that spirit's vision can share also its delight in the same sort of original stuff. Imagine, for example, the state of mind of a person who can argue that it is a weakness, if not a literary impropriety, to prefer Goethe's conversations with Eckermann at times to *Faust*.

There are very proper moods which the noblest work of art cannot satisfy as well as some casual memoir, some quaint history or book of travel, some halting speculation, some mere array of facts. Who has not preferred the nasturtiums or turnips of his own garden to more sumptuous flowers or vegetables from the open market? The pleasant odours of many mornings and the colour of many fine sunsets cling about the blossoms which he has tended; the plain roots from his soil have in them the savour of honest sweat and

the contour of agreeable hopes. So the creative reader likes frequently to shape his own designs and make his own conclusions out of raw materials which no other hand—however better he may know it is—has worked with. In fact, it is now and then hard for a reader in the full strength of some creative impulse to keep himself as aware of the positive aesthetic merit of what he is reading as perhaps he should. If the matter of life is there in large abundance he may overlook the lack of form and proportion and interpretation because he is himself able to supply them. It is for this reason that generous spirits like Sir Walter Scott, and even more rigid critics, seem often to have gone too far in their praise of this or that book which has not survived or pleased as much as they expected; they were misled by finding in the book an element of creation which they had contributed but which colder readers do not find there. If criticism, professional or amateur, were an exact science, practised in a vacuum, the creative reader by his vagaries might deserve the accusation of being a sort of astrologer among the scientists; but it is not, and so his more creative vagaries must be classed less with the winds of bad doctrine than with the breath of life.

ART AS A MAGIC MIRROR*

By John B. Priestley

(John Boynton Priestley is a contemporary English novelist and essayist. He has contributed essays and reviews to most of the better English and American magazines.)

There hangs in the drawing-room, on the wall opposite the fireplace, one of those delightful little convex mirrors. It is a genuinely old one, surmounted by the eagle in dull gold, and has that perfect slight curve in its surface which

*Reprinted by permission from *The Forum*, July, 1927.

no present day makers seem able to imitate. A new convex mirror gives you an obviously distorted reflection, something merely grotesque, but this old glass does not seem to distort the room it reflects but only to compress it slightly, give it an admirable suggestion of distance, and make everything in it as bright as a new coin. A reflection of a room, like a photograph of a room, always looks better than the actual place itself, but there is real magic in this convex mirror. The room it shows me, so small and bright, is obviously the drawing-room I know so well, for there is not a chair, a rug, an ornament, excluding those things that are underneath the glass and therefore not within its focus, that it does not present with loving clarity; but nevertheless it is not that room as I ordinarily see it, staring with dull eyes, but my drawing-room as it might be if it were transferred to another and brighter world than this, if it were suddenly seen in a vision, or perhaps as a happy child might see it. I have only to peer into that round, shining surface to see my room and all that is in it, myself included, to find my way into an enchantment. It offers me glimpses of a faerie place.

What I see, however, is simply my own place touched with faerie. And that is all I want to see. Many people, who wish to escape from this world altogether, would think nothing of such a mirror but would clap their hands at the thought of a glass that showed them nothing of what was before it but some other place, perhaps a Chinese river or a tower in Spain. I am not of their company. I desire nothing better than to see my own place, my own familiar hearth and belongings, reflected so clearly and brightly and lovingly and yet haunted by a sense of the unearthly. Already that mirror has been worth to me far more than its weight in gold. Many a time I have stood before the fireplace, sunk in that mood in which we first find Hamlet, and then suddenly I looked across at the wall opposite and have seen

that little reflection, that bright, lovely, little room with my tiny self at the end of it; and all that was weary, stale, and flat has disappeared, and I have rejoiced to think that I was living in such a world. Not another world than this, mark you, not some Arabia of the thousand-and-one nights, not some Avalon beyond the reach of wind and rain and starry with unfading apple-blossom, but this old familiar place, where every nook has been explored, caught once more with the dew upon it, appearing once again as it did perhaps on some lost May morning. It is this unusual blend of the familiar and the fantastic, this presentation of the commonplace touched with wonder, that is at once so magical and endearing. If a man's imagination is not diseased, warped, or stunted, what more does it want than this? Unless we are madmen, wishing to escape altogether from reality, to be emperor of a crazy world of our own, or mere beasts, wanting nothing so long as our appetites, growing ever more gross, are slaked, we desire neither to be hurried away from real things nor merely to move among them in a dull disenchantment, but crave for the world as perhaps it once appeared to us, demanding that the curse so vividly described in Wordsworth's Ode shall be removed. This earth is the place for us, but those shades of the prison-house, making all things dull and stale, must be lifted and dispelled by the renewing of wonder.

Sometimes the little mirror shows me the others in the house and the friends who come to visit us. I look across and suddenly catch a glimpse of them in that other room, so small and bright, which shines on the wall. The glass distorts them but only so subtly as to give me, as it were, the essence of them. If they are tall, now they are taller; if they are fat, now they are fatter; and so forth. A crimson dress, a white shawl, a graceful attitude, rounded arms, and a midnight of hair, whatever is offered to the mirror is returned artfully heightened and deepened so that it seems

more itself than ever; never was a dress so glowingly crimson or a shawl so white. And the people themselves, for the most part so familiar in every detail of dress, every look and gesture, are most vividly and hauntingly their very selves when they are seen, perhaps only for a second or so, on that strange, mirrored world whose window is the curved glass on the wall. They come to the sight as sometimes, in long absence, they flash into the memory, with every significant detail subtly emphasized. Though they are there, in the room beside me, I seem to know these friends of mine better than ever, sometimes my mind seems to taste the very essence of their personalities, just because I catch a glimpse of them in that glass. They too, like myself and the room, are happily living in that seemingly enchanted world. We are all there together, and that is as it should be; for just as I want my own familiar place and not some palace at the back of the moon, so too I want my own friends and not demigods and genii of supernatural wisdom and beauty. Again, they too, like the room, are themselves, indeed more themselves then ever, but are also touched with strangeness, lit with wonder. As I look at that small, circular reflection, I find it impossible to believe that we are ever bored and tired and spiritless, that we are not all having the most amazing adventures together. Once more I am a boy at his first grand party. But this does not mean that I feel we are all brimmed with effortless enjoyment and unending gaiety, that all melancholy, all sense of mystery, have been banished; but merely that we are apparently existing in a world so rich and strange and lovely that life is a colossal boon even in its melancholy and mystery. In the last resort, we do not ask that experience shall be pleasurable but that it shall be complex and colorful, as rich as an old tale.

When daylight ebbs out of the room, it vanishes even more rapidly from the face of the mirror. Just as its reflection during the day is brighter and clearer than the room itself,

so too at night there are more shadows and mysterious distances in its depths than the room can show. It has a deeper night to counter-balance its brighter day. But first there is dusk. Then, before the lamps are lit and when the place is filled with firelight, the mirror glows faintly like a dull jewel, but in the very centre of it are tiny leaping flames, like a beacon seen across miles of clear night. The room itself is secure and cozy, but you can peer through the mirror's window into an atmosphere of still more blissful security and coziness. Later it is loveliest when we leave the lamps unlit and gather round the hearth, to talk or play a hand at cards, with nothing more than candle-light. Many a time, when my partner has called her three no trumps and I have sent my glittering kings and knaves into the green lists, I have looked across at the opposite wall and let eyes and mind brood over the dim reflection there. Night commands the glass, but our candles form a tiny, yellow constellation in that night; and sometimes, if you stare hard, you can see beneath this constellation, in the very heart of the mystery, shadowy forms and little faces more vague than forms and faces in a dream. Thus the mirror tells you that you are not only sitting over a game of cards with a friend or two in candle-light, but that you are crouching on a star in old night and moving in a mystery.

This little convex mirror seems to me the perfect symbol of art. I would have art do no more nor less with life than the mirror does with my drawing-room and the people in it. Art is not a cold reflection of the surface of things, giving fact for fact, nor is it a wild distortion, twisting things insanely out of all recognition in order to escape from reality. The magic of this mirror lies in the fact that it seems to touch reality with fantasy, keep to the commonplace and yet surround it with wonder, by its power of selecting, compressing, and subtly distorting whatever is presented to its surface. You may contrast with it the ordinary mirror, which

simply presents you with the facts, the ordinary surface of things, and so cannot master your imagination and restore to you the wonder of youth; and those wildly curved glasses that used to be found in old exhibitions and palaces of pleasure, those crazy mirrors that distorted the onlookers into monsters. Art at its best is like that slightly convex mirror and is as rare as such mirrors are rapidly becoming; but art in general is forever swinging over from the representation of the common looking-glass to that of the crazy mirrors. In other words, it is forever falling into the error of either coldly reporting the surface of things or escaping altogether into sheer fantasy, of either giving us a photographic record or a wild distortion. We have had,—I am speaking of all the arts together,—a long period of common looking-glasses, and now we are about to be plunged into a gallery that contains nothing but crazy mirrors. Seventy-five out of a hundred of our brightest young artists, that is, the young who have obviously more talent and energy than their fellows, whether they are poets, novelists, composers, painters, or sculptors, are crazy mirror manufacturers. I refer, of course, to the serious artists and not to the mere mountebanks and charlatans who are taking advantage of our present state of esthetic chaos and critical timidity to push their fortunes. These last are crazy mirror men, so far as their poor creations can be called mirrors at all, but only for the reason that it is far easier to put together some bulging and dented monstrosity of glass than to achieve the even surface of the ordinary looking-glass, let alone the exact slight curve of the ideal convex mirror. . . .

The art with which I am most concerned, however, is literature, and I have only to think of what seem to me the loveliest and most significant things in literature to see that the little convex mirror is a perfect symbol. It is the poet or novelist among looking-glasses. I have described already how it reflects, very clearly and brightly, the room it hangs

in, and yet contrives to give me glimpses of a faerie place. Those last two words, as their curiously magical quality would suggest even to some one who did not know their origin, I have borrowed from a great poet. Wordsworth hears the cuckoo, which seems to him

> "No bird, but an invisible thing,
> A voice, a mystery;"

and cries at the end of the poem:

> "O blessed Bird! The earth we pace
> Again appears to be
> An unsubstantial, faery place;
> That is fit home for Thee!"

And there is in this poem, as there is in all his more inspired poems, that very magic he celebrates in the cuckoo's call and that I have praised in my mirror. He has the power of touching reality with fantasy, of dealing honestly with the earth, not escaping headlong from it, and yet making it haunting and unearthly, giving a common sight the quality of a vision. That is why he is a great poet. Little poets are either content to set down the facts, patiently describing the surface of things (as Wordsworth himself was when he was not inspired), or eager to escape reality altogether, to rush away from the sounds and sights they know into palaces of sapphires and emeralds and glades where the Phoenix burns and the swans go singing. But great poets delicately curve and polish their minds so that we may look into them and see our own hearth and windows, the grass and trees and clouds beyond, as I have seen these things in the curved and polished surface of my mirror, the same familiar and lovable things but now a little strange and curiously exciting, catching at the heart.

There is even more significance in the symbolism of the mirror when we come to what is perhaps the characteristic

literary form of our day, the art of fiction. In the last resort a man can only speak for himself in these matters, and so I will say that for my own part out of the hundreds and hundreds of contemporary novels and short stories I have read, the only ones that have really fastened upon my imagination, haunted my mind so that I have been compelled to turn to them more than once, are those that have dealt with life as my mirror reflects the drawing-room. All the rest have been either common looking-glasses or crazy mirrors, and it is worth remarking that here, as in the other arts, there are signs of a general movement on the part of younger writers from the looking-glasses to the crazy mirrors. They are tired of realism, so they are all heading for the purely fantastic. No longer will they merely report, but they insist upon inventing. Thus the fairy-tale begins again, and we are lured into worlds where ladies can be turned into foxes and nephews made of glass. As a reaction, this is by no means unhealthy, and the result, like the crazy mirrors, by no means unamusing. But I cannot help thinking that sheer fantasy is little more than an escape, both from the business of facing the facts and of real imaginative creation as opposed to invention, and that the difference between fables in this vein and stories in which reality is subtly touched with fantasy is the difference between a bright toy and a musical instrument. This is not the criticism of a literal-minded man, but one who has found delight in the maddest fairy-tales; yet my own experience as reader bids me declare that arbitrary strokes of the fantastic are weakening to the hold of a story upon the imagination and have a trick of undermining its significance. I have noticed that the greatest success of such stories is with those readers who are possessed of a certain rather weary culture, a literary palate that needs to be constantly tickled, and who are not very anxious, in their reading or out of it, to take a long, steady look at life. The world just now is full of

quick, cleverish people who can partly comprehend everything they see and hear but never really understand the full significance of anything, people to whom the world appears as a sucked orange when in reality they have hardly penetrated the rind. Our passing fashions in the novel are largely dictated by such people, and a study of their prevailing moods explains a good deal. At the moment, in their heart of hearts, they are terrified of reality, and are only too glad to bury themselves in a mock eighteenth century or anything else that offers ornamental cover. . . .

The novel should present its people as my mirror reflects the visitors in the drawing-room. They should be neither drab sketches, police court summaries and dossiers of human beings, nor yet creatures of incredible beauty, brain, or will. They should be people as I know them, but, as it were, more themselves than ever, as my friends often seem when I catch a glimpse of them in the mirror. A flat reflection will not do, and there are several fine, conscientious novelists who, having a good sense of character and reacting against the mere grotesque, have spoilt their work by not realizing this truth. The novelist, like my mirror, must subtly distort, otherwise he or she will not achieve the effect of intense reality and significance, if only because everything has to be done in a few hundred pages of print, in two or three hours' reading. Just as the painter has to cram three dimensions into two, so the novelist has to present us in a little space with people who must be as real to us as the friends we have known for years. A flat reflection will not bring about this miracle, and neither will sheer grotesquerie. Everything depends on that lovely slight curve on the reflecting surface, by means of which there is an exquisite compression, a selection of essential details, so that daylight is brighter and clearer and the night darker and more mysterious, figures and faces more distinct and characteristic, than they commonly appear to dull eyes

not cleared and sharpened by emotion. How this mirror's curve is to be achieved in the words of a narrative, or, for that matter, of a poem, or in paint or ink or clay, is a problem for every individual artist, and the rest of us can only wait and hope, ready at least with our applause. Meanwhile, however, having to wait, an occasional glance at the little mirror on the wall will tell us what it is we are hoping for, give us a glimpse of a world through which genuine art can take us on gigantic journeys.

THE FUNCTION OF CRITICISM*

By Matthew Arnold

(Matthew Arnold, 1822-1888, was one of the foremost English men of letters during the nineteenth century. He was called to the chair of poetry at Oxford in 1857 and again in 1862, being compelled by statute to retire in 1867. He exerted great influence upon the educational system of England. He wrote extensively upon educational topics, but he is best known as essayist and poet.)

The critical power is of lower rank than the creative. True; but in assenting to this proposition, one or two things are to be kept in mind. It is undeniable that the exercise of a creative power, that a free creative activity, is the highest function of man; it is proved to be so by man's finding in it his true happiness. But it is undeniable, also, that men may have the sense of exercising this free creative activity in other ways than in producing great works of literature or art; if it were not so, all but a very few men would be shut out from the true happiness of all men. They may have it in well-doing, they may have it in learning, they may have it even in criticising. This is one thing to be kept in mind. Another is, that the exercise of the creative power in the production of great works of literature or

* From "The Function of Criticism at the Present Time," in *Essays in Criticism*, by Matthew Arnold.

art, however high this exercise of it may rank, is not at all epochs and under all conditions possible; and that therefore labour may be vainly spent in attempting it, which might with more fruit be used in preparing for it, in rendering it possible. This creative power works with elements, with materials; what if it has not those materials, those elements ready for use? In that case it must surely wait till they are ready. Now, in literature,—I will limit myself to literature, for it is about literature that the question arises,—the elements with which the creative power works are ideas; the best ideas on every matter which literature touches, current at the time. At any rate we may lay it down as certain that in modern literature no manifestation of the creative power not working with these can be very important or fruitful. And I say *current* at the time, not merely accessible at the time; for creative literary genius does not principally show itself in discovering new ideas, that is rather the business of the philosopher. The grand work of literary genius is a work of synthesis and exposition, not of analysis and discovery; its gift lies in the faculty of being happily inspired by a certain intellectual and spiritual atmosphere, by a certain order of ideas, when it finds them; of dealing divinely with these ideas, presenting them in the most effective and attractive combinations,—making beautiful works with them, in short. But it must have the atmosphere, it must find itself amidst the order of ideas, in order to work freely; and these it is not so easy to command. This is why great creative epochs in literature are so rare, this is why there is so much that is unsatisfactory in the productions of many men of real genius; because, for the creation of a master-work of literature two powers must concur, the power of the man and the power of the moment, and the man is not enough without the moment; the creative power has, for its happy exercise, appointed elements, and those elements are not in its own control.

Nay, they are more within the control of the critical power. It is the business of the critical power, as I said in the words already quoted, "in all branches of knowledge, theology, philosophy, history, art, science, to see the object as in itself it really is." Thus it tends, at last, to make an intellectual situation of which the creative power can profitably avail itself. It tends to establish an order of ideas, if not absolutely true, yet true by comparison with that which it displaces; to make the best ideas prevail. Presently these new ideas reach society, the touch of truth is the touch of life, and there is a stir and growth everywhere; out of this stir and growth come the creative epochs of literature. . . .

It is of the last importance that English criticism should clearly discern what rule for its course, in order to avail itself of the field now opening to it, and to produce fruit for the future, it ought to take. The rule may be summed up in one word—*disinterestedness*. And how is criticism to show disinterestedness? By keeping aloof from what is called "the practical view of things"; by resolutely following the law of its own nature, which is to be a free play of the mind on all subjects which it touches. By steadily refusing to lend itself to any of those ulterior, political, practical considerations about ideas, which plenty of people will be sure to attach to them, which perhaps ought often to be attached to them, which in this country at any rate are certain to be attached to them quite sufficiently, but which criticism has really nothing to do with. Its business is, as I have said, simply to know the best that is known and thought in the world, and by in its turn making this known, to create a current to true and fresh ideas. Its business is to do this with inflexible honesty, with due ability; but its business is to do more, and to leave alone all questions of practical consequences and applications, questions which will never fail to have due prominence given to them. Else criticism, besides being really false to its own nature, merely

continues in the old rut which it has hitherto followed in this country, and will certainly miss the chance now given to it.

THE FUNCTION OF CRITICISM*

By Henry Wells

(Those who maintain that men who can, write, and men who cannot write, criticise, will find slight confirmation in this extract from *The Judgment of Literature*, by Henry Wells. The author indicates the function of literary criticism, both for the writer and for the reader.)

Some measure of criticism becomes, then, a need of the artist himself. An examination of the work of writers most commonly thought to be naïve exhibits this. It has sometimes been said that Shakespeare wrote without critical promptings. But the evidence hardly supports so drastic a contention. He jests critically at bad plays and bad actors. With the true nonchalance of the artist he refers in vivid aphorisms to the doctrines of inspiration and imitation, to ideas of language, symbolism and imagination, rhetoric and poetic, simplicity and elaboration. *Love's Labour's Lost* is itself criticism from first to last. His balance of plot and sub-plot, his use of theatrical devices, his own patterns, as in the repetition of design in the first and second *Henry the Fourth*, his remodeling of old plays, his dramatization of prose narratives, his selections and rejections, his rewriting of speeches, his praise of moderation and his moral bias all show him well versed in the practice of making judgments. Doubtless Shakespeare reflected less systematically upon art than Ben Jonson; but that the greater poet lacked a reflective faculty in his art appears to me an utterly unsupportable contention.

* Reprinted by permission from *The Judgment of Literature*, Henry Wells, published by W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1928.

In the eighteenth century similar conditions obtain. It has sometimes been held that Burns warbled his native wood notes wild. Nevertheless not only Burns' prose works but his poems themselves show him often to have embraced the critical point of view. He was not so good a self-critic, we believe, as Pope; yet he too learned his art through study as well as through the happy promptings of nature. The romantic poets as a whole believed less in the power of criticism than the neoclassicists and left more to inspiration. Yet of course Keats thought profoundly on art; Coleridge and Wordsworth were never at a loss for a theory; Shelley wrote a critical defense of poetry; and Byron, the most informal critic of all, was by no means the least reflective. Chatterton enjoyed no more schooling than Burns. Yet Chatterton expressed some arresting views on this subject. To the statement that David, the author of the Psalms, must have been a pious man, he objected that a true poet may feign anything—an interesting observation to compare with Shakespeare's words that the best poetry is the most feigning. Again, Chatterton made interesting contrasts between poetry and history. Finally, of all poets none has thought more persistently on the subject of his art than William Blake.

Many modern thinkers take the romantic praise of inspiration even more seriously than the romanticists themselves. Modern pedagogy has at least served one useful purpose: it has demonstrated beyond dispute that the average mind can no more be taught great writing than great thinking. There are no universal rules for making a great artist. On the other hand private study has actually taught every artist no inconsiderable part of the secrets of his success. Although criticism is certainly not sufficient to make an artist, it is not too much to say that in the art of our present civilization it is really a necessity.

Nor will the average reader entirely avoid criticism. It

may be feared that the vigorous enemies of criticism resemble the man who disliked litchi nuts for the unreasonable reason that he had only eaten the bad ones. Much literary criticism is, to be sure, the echo of an echo, the dullest, most futile and impotent type of writing, servilely imitative, spineless in form, featureless in style, barren in information and insipid in ideas. Yet the genuine description of a reader's experience can never be scorned with impunity. If the lowland of criticism has its fatal bogs and morasses, we must recognize that it also spreads out into many healthful and inviting plains commanding views of the sublime mountains that lie beyond. Although nothing can be more of a bore than bad criticism, an intelligent criticism has its real uses, both to reader and to artist.

Again we are forced to the observation that criticism is a desirable though not in itself a sufficient provocation to enjoyment. To admire a work of art simply because one can give reasons for its excellence is to be the slave of reason. Obviously no one should allow himself to be persuaded to the enjoyment of a work which his own faculties at the time do not render delightful. Although some of our tastes may be even ultimately acquired, at any given moment criticism can rightly claim only to disclose certain minor beauties that without it would be lost in the shadow, or to show the more powerful beauties of a work in a stronger light. The position of the critic in art is of course that of the teacher. He can only be of service when a mind has already been prepared by nature or by a long-passed training to receive the instruction. The man is unfortunate who cannot say that he has increased his own understanding of art by association with his neighbor. Most appreciation, to be sure, comes to us in ways far from philosophical. We are inspired by the rapt attitude of the lover of art over a book, a painting or a violin, to an increased eagerness of perception, and in company with one who is already initiated

we too find a fuller appreciation steal upon us. A casual phrase or word even may suddenly throw open new gateways of insight. Nevertheless the more formal criticism can hardly be slighted. The poets themselves have not spared the praise of authors, even in their own writings. Lucretius gives us new insight into Epicurus, Dante into Bonaventura, Spenser into Plato and Browning into Sordello. The finely written essay in criticism, itself a beautiful work of art, discloses new heights and depths in the still greater artist. Even a work in esthetics may give us a truer orientation toward one art or toward all the arts, a wiser outlook and a keener appreciation of certain of art's outstanding qualities than, had we not perused it, we should have possessed. Undoubtedly many even of the most gifted readers owe more to criticism than they are generally willing to admit. The ardent love of literature is contagious. We contract the enthusiasm from one another.

Moreover there is need that each reader should be his own critic. Just as the landscape-painter stands in a singularly favorable position as enjoyer of landscape because he has attempted to reproduce, feature by feature, the impression which scenes have left upon him, so the reader who has attempted to express even to himself the nature of his experiences with books stands in a most favorable position to enjoy these books fully. It is a most palpable fallacy to hold that analysis or restatement kills enjoyment. On the contrary, the chances are much in favor of the articulate man as the most appreciative man. While the poor critics are as a rule dull in enjoyment, being men who see great art as featureless prose and interpret it as such, good critics are as a rule among the most sensitive and keen sighted of art lovers. Their criticism is to them simply a natural phase of self-expression. A powerful impulse urged John Muir, the explorer, to describe with his spirited pen the natural scenes that delighted him on his explorations. Similarly the in-

stinctive critic, as Lamb, Hazlitt, Lowell, or Pater, longs to describe his experience with the last good book that he has read. Critics have at times been compelled to meet the aspersion of parasitism. The charge can easily be repelled. Just as it was really self-expression on the part of Muir to write of the Yosemite or of the Grand Canyon, so was it in Lowell to write of Shakespeare or of Milton. Literary criticism must, then, exist so long as men enjoy literature and feel compelled to create interpretative images of their own experiences. The intimate relation between morality and the art of words, the positions of the philosopher and dialectician, the need of the artist himself and of the reader to appreciate more fully and to express their own experiences with books, make the judgment of literature a natural and desirable enterprise.

LIBERTY AND AUTHORITY IN MATTERS OF TASTE*

By William J. Courthope

(*Life in Poetry: Law in Taste*, from which this extract is taken, contains two groups of lectures on poetry given when William J. Courthope was Professor of Poetry at Oxford. The author has a number of publications to his credit, notably the *History of English Poetry* in six volumes. This selection discusses a question which arises in the mind of every student as he emerges from childhood into maturity where he is called upon to exercise his own taste in literature and drama.)

There is no doubt a point at which the principle *De gustibus non est disputandum*[1] must be strictly applied. Our English law recognises this. We know that when a man pursues his own taste so far as to publish in writing that which is decided to be contrary to the law of the land, the plea of the offender that he only wrote what seemed beautiful to

* Reprinted by permission from *Life in Poetry: Law in Taste*, by William J. Courthope, published by The Macmillan Company, 1901.

[1] There is no disputing about taste.

him, or what he believed to be true, will not avail for his protection. Tastes of that kind we do not dispute about; we punish them. It is seldom indeed in England that any individual so far oversteps the large liberties allowed him by the law as to translate into action opinions which are recognised as dangerous to the community. But beyond those appetites which are proscribed as illegal there are secret proceedings of thought and perception which, while they elude the clumsy vigilance of the law, may poison the atmosphere about us—tastes that corrupt, sentiments that emasculate, affectations that debase, the whole spirit and character of society. To treat these with easy tolerance is only a sign of social cowardice. A nation which has a just sense of its own greatness and liberty must also have a sense of what is ideally noble and beautiful, and must not be afraid to condemn any departure from this standard. And indeed all experience shows that the instinct of every society impels it to assert its authority in questions relating to imagination and art. Nature bids us judge in matters of taste: the difficulty is how to judge rightly. Since, then, this is the object of our inquiry, I will ask you in the first place very briefly to glance at the different kinds of external tribunal by which Society has endeavoured to decide questions of taste, in order that we may see how far we can accept their authority.

Perhaps the form of external authority which most readily occurs to each of us is the Academy after the French model. No one will deny a grandeur to the constitution and history of this great body. You will remember what was the object of its creation as described by Richelieu, its founder: "The main function of the Academy shall be to work with all possible care and diligence at giving sure rules to our language, and rendering it pure, eloquent, and capable of treating the arts and sciences." And Renan, adding a slight emphasis to the idea of Richelieu, says: "The duty of the

Academy is to preserve the delicacy of the French language." As far as regards the intellectual history of France, these strictly conservative duties have been performed with splendid fidelity and success. The Academy has admitted within its walls almost every great French writer since the day of its foundation, so that on literary grounds it may justly claim to speak with the representative authority of France. In the standard of taste which it has consistently upheld, the French nation has seen the image of its own genius. One doubts whether to admire the Academy most for the thoroughness with which it has realised the idea of Richelieu, by carrying the rules of the French language through the anarchy of the Revolution, or for the courage with which it has maintained the standard of Renan, by preserving the delicacy of French thought in the days of M. Zola.

I do not wonder that so great a triumph should have profoundly impressed the imagination of English critics, or that we should frequently hear the opinion expressed, that it would be an excellent thing if we could have an institution of the same kind in England. Those who speak in this way usually support themselves by the authority of Matthew Arnold, and refer to a lecture delivered, I believe, from this Chair, on the Literary Influence of Academies. But they seem to me to misunderstand the mind of that eminent critic, because though all his arguments point at the foundation of an Academy in England, he concludes as follows: "An Academy quite like the French Academy, a sovereign organ of the highest literary opinion, a recognised authority in matters of intellectual tone and taste, we shall hardly have, and perhaps we ought not to wish to have it." That is the conclusion of common sense, and the most elementary considerations show why it must be so. . . .

I might dwell on other Courts, of the nature of Academies, by means of which Society at different times has

attempted to pronounce judgment in matters of taste. Such, for example, is the Coterie, which may be defined as a miniature Academy without official status, and which under various conditions has exercised great influence in Italy, France, and England. But as the Coterie represents no body of opinion beyond itself, and as it flourishes most in an aristocratic form of society, it is unnecessary to speak of it in detail, and I pass on to consider a tribunal with whose decrees we are all familiar, the Court of Public Opinion.

Public opinion delivers judgment either collectively, or representatively by means of an anonymous press. When it acts collectively it is certainly one of the most remarkable of human phenomena, and I think that the spectacle of vast bodies of men giving simultaneous expression to their consciousness of what is right furnishes the strongest refutation that could be desired of the fallacy in the maxim, *De gustibus non est disputandum.* Such are the judgments pronounced by the spectators in a theatre, or by the audience at a public meeting when they express their approval of or dissent from the opinions of an orator. On these occasions the verdict of public opinion is, for the moment at least, irresistible. The dramatist is not obliged to regard it as final: he may reason with his judges, as Aristophanes did in the *Clouds*; he may even proclaim his contempt for their taste, as Ben Jonson did in his "Ode to Himself" after the failure of his *New Inn*; but he knows that there is no higher court to which he can appeal.

It must be allowed that, as a tribunal of taste, public opinion, or perhaps I should rather say popular opinion, possesses certain great virtues. For one thing, the taste of the people is almost always natural, and natural taste is the foundation of good taste. When a whole society—at least a society which is both historic and free—judges collectively, its instincts will not allow it to go very far astray. It will reject what is nasty and unwholesome; it will favour such

tastes as are on the whole manly, and healthy, and vigorous. The judges in the gallery of a theatre, who hiss the villain of a play for his evil sentiments, are representatives of the authority of popular opinion. Critics of this stamp will also show themselves intolerant of such fundamental faults of taste as affectation and conceit, which pass unscathed the judgment, for example, of the Coterie. When a dramatist or any other kind of artist shows that he is thinking more of his own nature than of human nature, any large audience will be quick to find him out. Nor is the collective verdict of the public ever consciously unjust, because, as it judges in the mass, it is not affected by those petty personal motives of envy, jealousy, and resentment which so often disturb the reason of private critics.

But public opinion as a court of justice has certain obvious limitations and weaknesses. Like the old Teutonic assemblies of freemen which announced their decisions by the shouts of the multitude and the clashing of shields, its powers are restricted to simple approval or rejection. Moreover its judgments are always arbitrary, being founded on emotion, not on reason. The standard by which it judges may be constituted out of the merest prejudice and ignorance, yet as it knows of no other, it will regard its own canon as conclusive. In no other tribunal is the last word of the despot so decisively uttered: "*Hoc volo, sic jubeo, stat pro ratione voluntas.*"[2]

Again, even when it decides more deliberately through the anonymous criticism of the press, public opinion is subject to weaknesses, arising from hurry and superficiality, which lower its authority as a tribunal of taste. To judge rightly in matters of taste we must have time. An enduring work of art is the product of meditation and labour, and, from the nature of things, it cannot be measured by a mere ephemeral standard. The press can and does judge with admirable

[2] I wish it, I so order, my will is sufficient reason.

accuracy of the mass of novels, poems, plays, and pictures, which men read, glance at, talk about, and forget: its methods of swift intuition and generalisation are inadequate to estimate the work of a Raphael or a Milton.

I think that from the facts I have attempted to put before you two conclusions may safely be drawn. One is, that society in all ages has been constantly attempting to assert its authority in matters of taste; the other is, that no form of social organisation of which the world has had experience is likely to be accepted as a tribunal of taste in such a country as England. The Academy of the French pattern is defective because it is the offspring of centralisation; the Coterie is defective because it is not representative; Public Opinion is defective because it has no recognised standard of judgment, and also because its judgments are too rough and ready to be applicable to the higher creations of Art. It may indeed be doubted whether for such a society as ours, so full of self-consciousness and the spirit of individual liberty, so charged with party feeling, divided between so many sections and interests, any representative body could ever be formed which would be recognised as giving expression to the deliberate sense of the community on purely aesthetic questions. Yet one thing we may surely hope for—the growth of an educated Public Conscience in matters of taste which shall exercise a general influence on private judgment. Perhaps the most signal of the services performed by Matthew Arnold was the constancy with which he insisted on the necessity of exercising right reason within the sphere of criticism. This is no mere rhetorical phrase. For not only is it possible to apply right methods of reasoning in art and taste, but certain evil consequences inevitably ensue when these methods are neglected. Every critic who attempts to decide a disputed point of taste must satisfy two conditions; in the first place he must judge judicially, that is to say, he must strive to regard the object

of his criticism scientifically and apart from prejudice; in the second place he must verify his own conclusions by reference to some recognised standard of authority. This seems almost like the statement of a truism, and yet how rare it is to find both requirements fulfilled! How often, on the one hand, does private dislike and prejudice intervene to cut off the critic from the sight of his object; how often, on the other, is he satisfied with the unassisted decision of his own consciousness! And what are the consequences? Let me illustrate by two notable examples what happens when critics content themselves with satisfying one of the essential conditions of good criticism without attending to the other.

Probably no literary judgment ever produced more disastrous results in the interests of good taste than the article in the *Quarterly Review* on Keats's *Endymion*. Here the issue as between Liberty and Authority was raised in a very trenchant manner. Keats was an innovator. Both in his treatment of his subject, in his diction, and in his versification, he came into violent collision with the canons of composition accepted in his day. Yet in the points of taste which called for a decision there was really nothing new. The question, for example, as to the right of coining new words or reviving disused words in poetry was as old as Horace; it had been debated in Italy by Castiglione in his *Courtier*; it had been raised in France by the Pleiad, and afterwards discussed by almost every French critic; it was familiar in England since the publication of Lyly's *Euphues*. The ruling on the point is given with admirable clearness in Horace's *Ars Poetica*:

> Multa renascentur quae jam cecidere, cadentque
> Quae nunc sunt in honore vocabula, si volet usus,
> Quem penes arbitrium est et jus et norma loquendi.[3]

[3] Many terms that have fallen out of use shall be born again, and those shall fall that are now in repute, if Usage so will it, in whose hands lies the judgment, the right, and the rule of speech.

Usus; usage; the genius of the language; there was the law. The sole question was whether Keats had violated the law, and if so, with what amount of justification. Nothing could have been simpler than to apply the test of right reason. But how did Croker deliver judgment? In the first place he announced that he had only read one book of *Endymion*, which was quite enough for him. In the next place, as to the particular point at issue, he decided as follows:—

"By this time our readers must be pretty well satisfied as to the meaning of Mr. Keats's sentences and the structure of his lines. We now present them with some of the new words with which, in imitation of Mr. Leigh Hunt, he adorns our language. We are told that 'turtles *passion* their voices'; that an arbour was *nested*; and a lady's locks *gordianed up*; and to supply the names of the nouns thus verbalised, Mr. Keats with great fecundity spawns new ones; such as 'men-slugs and human *serpentry*'; the *honey-feel* of bliss; wives prepare *needments*; and so forth."

Now as to the substance of this judgment we cannot doubt that Croker was right. He had satisfied one of the conditions of sound criticism in referring to a positive standard of authority, and, like all sane critics before him, he had taken usage as the standard of measurement. Keats had offended against the genius of the English language with crudeness, violence, and affectation. But could anything be more unjudicial than the manner in which Croker told him so, without making any allowance for the fact that he was a young man, and evidently a young man of genius? More unfortunate still in the interests of criticism was the fact that Croker's judgment, besides being offensive and contemptuous in tone, was in certain points incorrect. The standard of usage by which he measured was simply the standard recognised in his own day without reference to the historic growth of the language, and he showed ignorance in supposing Keats

to have been merely coining new words. Hence the "cockney school" as he called the innovators, while they justly complained of his manners, could also point to his mistakes. They hardened themselves in impenitence, and began to criticise by rules of their own the practice of the prevailing school, whom, with a ludicrous self-importance, they called the disciples of "one Boileau." The general reader was puzzled with the dispute, but when he turned to *Endymion*, and found there such an exquisite passage as

> "Whence come ye, jolly Satyrs, whence come ye,
> So many, and so many, and such glee?"

he was amazed at the blindness of the Quarterly Reviewer, and concluding that he must be entirely wrong, rejected his whole standard of measurement—though it was really a just one—to the irreparable damage of good taste and common sense.

This is an example of the consequences of not judging judicially. As an illustration of the results of judging by a merely private standard, I think I shall not be mistaken in citing Matthew Arnold's lecture on the Literary Influence of Academies. You will remember that he there criticises a great number of English authors, amongst others Addison, Jeremy Taylor, Burke, and Mr. Ruskin, from whose works he quotes passages as samples of bad taste in writing. It is plain that Matthew Arnold is here judging judicially. All the examples he produces are really examples of bad taste. All of them are selected with great fineness of perception and great accuracy of instinct. But whereas the kind of taste they exhibit is extremely diverse, specific, and characteristic of the individual, Matthew Arnold chooses for his own purposes to ascribe their defects to one single source, and that a national one. He says: "Adopting Dr. Newman's expressive word, I say that in the bulk of the intellectual work of a nation which has no centre, no intel-

lectual metropolis like an Academy—like M. Sainte-Beuve's 'sovereign organ of opinion,' like M. Renan's 'recognised authority in matters of tone and taste'—there is observable a note of provinciality. Now to get rid of provinciality is a certain stage of culture, a stage the positive results of which we must not make of too much importance, but which is nevertheless indispensable; for it brings us on to the platform, where alone the best and the highest intellectual work can be said to begin." There have been some who shrank from bringing an indictment against a whole nation. Matthew Arnold had no such diffidence. But what is the supposed standard by which he judges? The note of provinciality? How can the genius of a great nation be called provincial? Of what central society is a nation a province? Is it not plain that, when Matthew Arnold produces a rhetorical effect by a phrase like this, he is judging by a measure recognised only by himself? The world would not have accepted Quintilian's judgment on Seneca's style as conclusive, if he had not criticised it by canons which the world could understand.

Thus then we are brought to the practical question—What is the final authority to which right reason should refer in judging of matters of taste? I do not think that we can be in doubt about the answer. In every art the standard is the example of the great artist, the practice of those who are acknowledged to be masters in the art. Not, however, because they are arbitrary dictators. There are, I think, two paramount reasons why the standard must be settled by them. One is that argument from antiquity which is so admirably stated by Sir Joshua Reynolds in his *Discourses on Painting*. He says: "The modern who recommends himself as a standard may justly be suspected as ignorant of the true end, and unacquainted with the proper object, of the art which he professes. To follow such a guide will

not only retard the student but mislead him. On whom then can he rely, or who will show him the path that leads to excellence? The answer is obvious: those great masters who have travelled the same road with success are the most likely to conduct others. The works of those who have stood the test of ages have a claim to that respect and veneration to which no modern can pretend. The duration and stability of their fame is sufficient to evince that it has not been suspended upon the slender thread of fashion and caprice, but bound to the human heart by every tie of sympathetic approbation."

But there is, it seems to me, another reason even more powerful than the argument from antiquity, though it merely presents a different side of the same truth: great artists are the standards of art, because they are old no doubt, but also because they are representative. I take all great poetry to be not so much what Plato thought it, the utterance of individual genius, half inspired, half insane, as the enduring voice of the soul and conscience of man living in society. The great poets and orators of Greece and Rome are justly accepted as our masters in eloquence, because their works present in an ideal form lasting records of the thoughts and emotions which the human heart experiences in the various vicissitudes of active life. For example, Milton says, in words which are a living part of our language,

> "Fame is the spur that the clear spirit doth raise
> (That last infirmity of noble mind)
> To scorn delights and live laborious days."

But is it not a striking thought that, between two and three thousand years before, the same sublime logic should be found in the words with which Homer makes Sarpedon animate the courage of Glaucus, and which have scarcely

lost anything of their original nobility, in the version of Homer's English translator?

> "Could all our care elude the gloomy grave
> Which claims alike the fearful and the brave,
> For lust of fame I would not vainly dare
> In fighting fields to urge the soul to war.
> But since, alas! ignoble age must come,
> Disease, and death's inexorable doom,
> The life that others pay let us bestow,
> And give to Fame what we to Nature owe.
> Brave though we fall, and honoured if we live,
> Or let us glory gain, or glory give."

We watch the conflict between divine and human law in the *Antigone* of Sophocles, and we realise the eternal truth of the dramatic situation when we pass to the history of England and see it repeated in the tragedy of Alice Lisle. How intelligible seems the dispute between the Just and Unjust Argument in the *Clouds* of Aristophanes to the old English Tory! Why do we in this country feel a peculiar sublimity in the famous oath of Demosthenes on the souls of those who fought at Marathon and Salamis? Is it not because we cherish the memories of the men who perished under Nelson and Wellington in a later defence of European liberty? And when we read the ever memorable lines of Virgil,

> Tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento;
> Hae tibi erunt artes, pacisque imponere morem,[4]

what Englishman is not proud to feel how justly they may be applied to those who administer the government of India?

[4] Remember thou, O Roman, to rule the nations with sway—these shall be thine arts—to impose the habits of peace. *Aeneid VI*, 851-852.

THE CRITICS' CONCERN WITH VALUE*

By I. A. Richards

(The necessity which rests upon the literary critic to consider questions of value, the present confusion of values in art and literature, and the need for a naturalistic morality as opposed to a morality of abstractions, these propositions are clearly stated in the following extracts from *Principles of Literary Criticism*, by I. A. Richards, the English critic and philosopher. The work of this writer has attracted considerable attention, some of it adverse, much of it favorable. But whatever one may think about the working out of the principles in his books, one can but admire the clear statement of the fundamental principles.)

> What hinders? Are you beam-blind, yet to a fault
> In a neighbour deft-handed? Are you that liar?
> And cast by conscience out, spendsavour salt?
>
> —Gerard Hopkins

Between the general inquiry into the nature of the good and the appreciation of particular works of art, there may seem to be a wide gap, and the discussion upon which we are about to embark may appear a roundabout way of approaching our subject. Morals have often been treated, especially in recent times, as a side-issue for criticism, from which the special concern of the critic must be carefully separated. His business, so it has been said, is with the work of art in itself, not with any consequences which lie outside it. These may be left, it has been supposed, to others for attention, to the clergy perhaps or to the police.

That these authorities are sadly incompetent is a minor disadvantage. Their blunderings are as a rule so ridiculous that the effects are brief. They often serve a useful purpose in calling attention to work which might be overlooked.

*Reprinted by permission from *Principles of Literary Criticism*, by I. A. Richards, published by Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc., 1926.

What is more serious is that these indiscretions, vulgarities and absurdities encourage the view that morals have little or nothing to do with the arts, and the even more unfortunate opinion that the arts have no connection with morality. The ineptitudes of censors, their choice of censorable objects, ignoble blasphemy, such as that which declared *Esther Waters* an impure book, displays of such intelligence as considered *Madame Bovary* an apology for adulterous wrong, innumerable comic, stupefying, enraging interferences fully explain this attitude, but they do not justify it.

The common avoidance of all discussion of the wider social and moral aspects of the arts by people of steady judgment and strong heads is a misfortune, for it leaves the field free for folly, and cramps the scope of good critics unduly. So loath have they been to be thought at large with the wild asses that they have virtually shut themselves up in a paddock. If the competent are to refrain because of the antics of the unqualified, an evil and a loss which are neither temporary nor trivial increase continually. It is as though medical men were all to retire because of the impudence of quacks. For the critic is as closely occupied with the health of the mind as the doctor with the health of the body. In a different way, it is true, and with a wider and subtler definition of health, by which the healthiest mind is that capable of securing the greatest amount of value.

The critic cannot possibly avoid using some ideas about value. His whole occupation is an application and exercise of his ideas on the subject, and an avoidance of moral preoccupations on his part can only be either an abdication or a rejection under the title of 'morality' of what he considers to be mistaken or dishonest ideas and methods. The term has a dubious odour, it has been handled by many objectionable as well as admirable people, and we may agree to avoid it. But the errors exemplified by censorship ex-

ploits are too common, and misconceptions as to the nature of value too easy to fall into and too widespread, for useful criticism to remain without a general theory and an explicit set of principles.

What is needed is a defensible position for those who believe that the arts are of value. Only a general theory of value which will show the place and function of the arts in the whole system of values will provide such a stronghold. At the same time we need weapons with which to repel and overthrow misconceptions. With the increase of population the problem presented by the gulf between what is preferred by the majority and what is accepted as excellent by the most qualified opinion has become infinitely more serious and appears likely to become threatening in the near future. For many reasons standards are much more in need of defence than they used to be. It is perhaps premature to envisage a collapse of values, a transvaluation by which popular taste replaces trained discrimination. Yet commercialism has done stranger things: we have not yet fathomed the more sinister potentialities of the cinema and the loud-speaker, and there is some evidence, uncertain and slight no doubt, that such things as 'best-sellers' (compare *Tarzan* with *She*), magazine verses, mantelpiece pottery, Academy pictures, Music Hall songs, County Council buildings, War Memorials . . . are decreasing in merit. Notable exceptions, in which the multitude are better advised than the experts, of course occur sometimes, but not often.

To bridge the gulf, to bring the level of popular appreciation nearer to the consensus of best qualified opinion, and to defend this opinion against damaging attacks (Tolstoy's is a typical example), a much clearer account than has yet been produced, of why this opinion is right, is essential. These attacks are dangerous, because they appeal to a natural instinct, hatred of 'superior persons.' The expert in matters of taste is in an awkward position when he differs

from the majority. He is forced to say in effect, "I am better than you. My taste is more refined, my nature more cultured, you will do well to become more like me than you are." It is not his fault that he has to be so arrogant. He may, and usually does, disguise the fact as far as possible, but his claim to be heard as an expert depends upon the truth of these assumptions. He ought then to be ready with reasons of a clear and convincing kind as to why his preferences are worth attention, and until these reasons are forthcoming, the accusations that he is a charlatan and a prig are embarrassing. He may indeed point to years of preoccupation with his subject, he may remark like the wiseacre Longinus, sixteen hundred years ago, "The judgment of literature is the final outcome of much endeavour," but with him are many Professors to prove that years of endeavour may lead to nothing very remarkable in the end.

To habilitate the critic, to defend accepted standards against Tolstoyan attacks, to narrow the interval between these standards and popular taste, to protect the arts against the crude moralities of Puritans and perverts, a general theory of value, which will not leave the statement "This is good, that bad," either vague or arbitrary must be provided. There is no alternative open. Nor is it such an excursus from the inquiry into the nature of the arts as may be supposed. For if a well-grounded theory of value is a necessity for criticism, it is no less true that an understanding of what happens in the arts is needed for the theory. The two problems "What is good?" and "What are the arts?" reflect light upon one another. Neither in fact can be fully answered without the other. To the unravelling of the first we may now proceed. . . .

From this excursus let us return to our proper task, the attempt to outline a morality which will change its values as circumstances alter, a morality free from occultism, absolutes and arbitrariness, a morality which will explain, as

no morality has yet explained, the place and value of the arts in human affairs. What is good or valuable, we have said, is the exercise of impulses and the satisfaction of their appetencies. When we say that anything is good we mean that it satisfies, and by a good experience we mean one in which the impulses which make it are fulfilled and successful, adding as the necessary qualification that their exercise and satisfaction shall not interfere in any way with more important impulses. Importance we have seen to be a complicated matter, and which impulses are more important than others can only be discovered by an extensive inquiry into what actually happens. The problem of morality then, the problem of how we are to obtain the greatest possible value from life, becomes a problem of organisation, both in the individual life and in the adjustment of individual lives to one another, and is delivered from all non-psychological ideas, from absolute goods and immediate convictions, which incidentally help greatly to give unnecessary stiffness and fixity to obsolescent codes. Without system, needless to say, value vanishes, since in a state of chaos important and trivial impulses alike are frustrated.

A minor problem may occur here to the reader. It concerns the choice between a 'crowded hour' and 'an age without a name,' and the place of the time factor in valuation. There are many very valuable states which cannot last very long in the nature of the case, and some of these seem to have disabling consequences. But, to take merely the most interesting instance, if we knew more about the nervous constitution of genius we might discover that the instability from which so many people suffer who are at times best able to actualise the possibilities of life is merely a consequence of their plasticity; not in the least a price which they pay for such 'high moments,' but rather a result in systems of great delicacy of wear and tear at lower levels of adjustment. It is generally those who have the least

refined views of value who most readily believe that highly valuable hours must be paid for afterwards. Their conception of a 'hectic time' as the summit of human possibilities explains the opinion. For those who find that the most valuable experiences are those which are also most fruitful of further valuable experiences no problem arises. To the query whether they prefer a long life to a joyous one, they will reply that they find very satisfactory a life which is both.

The most valuable states of mind then are those which involve the widest and most comprehensive co-ordination of activities and the least curtailment, conflict, starvation and restriction. States of mind in general are valuable in the degree in which they tend to reduce waste and frustration. We must be careful in considering this formulation to remember how varied human activities are and avoid, for example, undue admiration for practical efficient persons whose emotional life is suppressed. But, thanks to the psychoanalysts, we are hardly likely at the moment to overlook the consequences of suppressions.

It is plain that no one systematisation can claim a supreme position. Men are naturally different and in any society specialisation is inevitable. There are evidently a great number of good systematisations and what is good for one person will not be good for another. A sailor, a doctor, a mathematician and a poet can hardly have the same organisation throughout. With different conditions different values necessarily arise. Doubtless conditions may be, and too often are, such that no life of high value is possible. With a naturalistic morality the reasons for altering them and the way to do so both become clearer. But even with our present resources and command over nature, it is universally agreed that intelligence and good-will could contrive that no man should be so situated as to be deprived of all the generally accessible values. The clearing away from moral questions of all ethical lumber and superstitious interpola-

tions is a step long overdue in this undertaking. But until it has been carried further, so it is often thought, to be busied with such apparently 'unpractical' activities as art or criticism is to behave too much like a passenger on a short-handed ship. This is true enough doubtless of some who so busy themselves. But it is not true that criticism is a luxury trade. The rear-guard of society cannot be extricated until the vanguard has gone further. Goodwill and intelligence are still too little available. The critic, we have said, is as much concerned with the health of the mind as any doctor with the health of the body. To set up as a critic is to set up as a judge of values. What are the other qualifications required we shall see later. For the arts are inevitably and quite apart from any intentions of the artist an appraisal of existence. Matthew Arnold when he said that poetry is a criticism of life was saying something so obvious that it is constantly overlooked. The artist is concerned with the record and perpetuation of the experiences which seem to him most worth having. For reasons which we shall consider in Chapter XXII, he is also the man who is most likely to have experiences of value to record. He is the point at which the growth of the mind shows itself. His experiences, those at least which give value to his work, represent conciliations of impulses which in most minds are still confused, intertrammelled and conflicting. His work is the ordering of what in most minds is disordered. That his *failures* to bring order out of chaos are often more conspicuous than those of other men is due in part at least to his greater audacity; it is a penalty of ambition and a consequence of his greater plasticity. But when he succeeds, the value of what he has accomplished is found always in a more perfect organisation which makes more of the possibilities of response and activity available.

What value is and which experiences are most valuable will never be understood so long as we think in terms of

those large abstractions, the virtues and the vices. "You do invert the covenants of her trust," said Comus, that disreputable advocate of Utilitarianism, to the Lady, that enemy of Nature. Instead of recognising that value lies in the 'minute particulars' of response and attitude, we have tried to find it in conformity to abstract prescriptions and general rules of conduct. The artist is an expert in the 'minute particulars' and *qua* artist pays little or no attention to generalisations which he finds in actual practice are too crude to discriminate between what is valuable and the reverse. For this reason the moralist has always tended to distrust or to ignore him. Yet since the fine conduct of life springs only from fine ordering of responses far too subtle to be touched by any general ethical maxims, this neglect of art by the moralist has been tantamount to a disqualification. The basis of morality, as Shelley insisted, is laid not by preachers but by poets. Bad taste and crude responses are not mere flaws in an otherwise admirable person. They are actually a root evil from which other defects follow. No life can be excellent in which the elementary responses are disorganised and confused.

THE STORY AND CIVILIZATION*

By Chief Buffalo Child Long Lance

(One of the reasons for presenting to college students the line of thought developed in this book, is the desirability that every educated person recognize the place of the story—of literature—in the building and transmission of civilization. The following extract gives interesting testimony from a civilization very different from ours.)

Our moral training was entirely in the hands of our mothers. They would tell us about our Great Spirit; and

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they told us that when we grew older the Great Spirit would appoint some other good spirit in the spirit world to be our guide and look after us. The spirit would give us our "medicine"—lucky charm—our medicine-song and our death song; the former to be sung at all times when in trouble, the latter when we were called on to die.

We had no Bible as the white boys have; so our mothers trained us to live right by telling us legends of how all of the good things started to be good. We had a legend for everything—from the care of our feet to the "great shame" befalling those who tell lies. Many long winter afternoons we would sit around our mother as she made skins into clothing, and listen to the magic stories of righteousness which she was passing on to us from the dark, unknown depths of history. . . .

We had a legend for everything that was good, and the more we youngsters lived up to the legends which our mothers told us the more highly respected we were in the tribe. We tried hard to remember each legend and to live out the moral that it taught us.

STOCKTAKING AT THIRTY-THREE*

By Gorham B. Munson

(Gorham B. Munson has been a teacher of English, a free lance journalist, a contributor to such magazines as *The Dial, The New Republic, The Saturday Review of Literature*, etc. These paragraphs from "Stocktaking at Thirty-Three" suggest some of the shortcomings in the training of writers of the generation now producing. Some of these shortcomings are the results of inadequate orientation toward art and the philosophy of art in colleges. This analysis may assist in the building of standards of literary values.

I have reached a good station at which to consider what my experience of being a young American writer has to teach

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me—and perhaps others, if it is as typical as I conceive it. I am thirty-three, with a dozen years of professional writing behind me: there have been four books, a small host of magazine contributions, several courses of literary lectures. . . .

Well, looking back how much waste and misguidance has there been? What things were not done that should have been done? The form of the question indicates the mood under which I am beginning this paper: I am dissatisfied with my education for authorship. . . .

Let me number our acceptances from the hands of the Time-Spirit, and briefly notice the harm I believe they did to our preparations to be writers. (1) We accepted, as almost everyone does, the doctrine of progress in human life. The latest school in psychology was an advance in human knowledge: anthropology was an advance in knowledge: machines were an advance: letters were advancing. Everywhere there was evolution: we were the heirs of all the ages: therefore take hold of literature at its growing end and advance! We started with *le dernier cri.* One of my generation, for instance, stated that the novel had been almost exhausted near its source by Flaubert, and sought therefore to subtract the logical content that Flaubert used and to write fictions unified only by a logic of form—a development he claimed that was implicit in Flaubert's conflict over esthetics. Well, wherever the various types of writing were heading, there we headed also—and *we were limited to only the obvious potential directions in a given period of literary production.* Or as Malcolm Cowley recently put it, in *Books,* "Nothing was left to ourselves—nothing except to deal with marginal experiences and abnormal cases, or else to say the old things over again with a clever and apologetic twist of our own. Nothing remained except the minor note. . . . So at least it seemed to us at seventeen."

(2) We accepted, consciously or unconsciously, the dogma of the Time-Spirit: it is necessary in our time to be a specialist. That is, we followed our special bent for one or two forms of writing: we encouraged our preferences and took little heed of other possibilities open to our pens. I, for instance, after a preliminary flurry of writing short stories, one-act plays, and barbarous *vers libre*, settled down to criticism. That was my love, and I used to boast truly that I was *one* critic who had not the slightest desire to try any other kind of composition. Yet the paradoxical truth is that one is a better writer, more flexible, more clear about the nature of a given task, more pointed, if one keeps in practice on a variety of forms in addition to the preferred one. But the tradition of fluency in many *genres* has, in spite of the examples of Bennett and Wells, been broken, and the environment collaborated with our inclinations and made the specialized artist the figure that motioned most seductively before our eyes. It is worth noting, in passing, because this will link up with reflections on my first point that current American literature is poverty-stricken in forms. We have no masques (delightful glinting gems of fancy), no one excels in the composition of dialogues, the picaresque novel is extinct with us, and will someone try to do an American "Vanity Fair"? Our literature is narrow, and we, young and old, are narrow specialists.

(3) The third acceptance is related to the second. We adopted with minor reservations the theory of art as expression—if not of America or the age, at least of ourselves. Naturally, this theory favors specialization, or growth only in the direction one likes to grow. The consequences were that we didn't try for an absolute command of the pen: we lost our range: we lost touch with the reader. The reader had to like us: if he didn't make the effort, be damned to him! Literature as a magic compelling the indifferent or

hostile reader to come under our power—such a concept never occurred to us. No, we were able to write only on subjects that naturally appealed to us and only in the manner that pleased our vanity: it was even dangerous, some of us thought, to be aware of a specific class of readers because then we would be tempted to "write down" to them.

(4) In accord with the Time-Spirit, we had no grip on the relation between writing and character. We were Bohemian in psychology and acknowledged no discipline but that of writing. We lived—most of us—for the sake of writing: we did not, except in casual verbal professions, write for the sake of living. We scorned the genetic criticism of Van Wyck Brooks not because his instruments were defective but because we repudiated any close relevance between the quality of the texture of a man's existence and the plays, verse, or fiction he penned. And so we strove for harmony, strength, and perfection in letters and—may I be impolite enough to say so?—showed little human dignity in our lives. We tended to put art on an island, isolated in the midst of life. . . .

How do I imagine an immature eagle of the pen would behave in the first ten years of his training as a writer? I do not fancy him worried about a few minor accomplishments; that is for the little birds. It is interesting where he puts his stress: it is on training, not on achievement. He is distinguished by a certain largeness of endeavor. He begins with a book of parodies, which develops both his insight into stylistic mechanics and his flexibility. He writes three or four novels for practice: whether or not they are published is quite another matter. He reviews books. He tries plays: he does a big drawerful of verses: he keeps a journal, writes his autobiography in all probability for his own eyes alone, fills his notebooks with vignettes and epigrams,

dredges the dictionary. His correspondence is simply another type of practice writing. Nor does he shy away from or hold journalism in contempt. A seemingly dull trade paper, for him, is an excellent gymnasium for his pen-abilities. In brief, our young eagle is prolific whereas the young writers I have known have been relatively meagre: he is various where we have been restricted. His spirit is not so much "artistic" as it is workmanlike: he wants to master his tools, to learn the nature of himself, his medium, and his readers. In effect, he sets up his own Academy and assiduously teaches himself from the examples of the great magicians of language.

There I strike something. It is weak to blame an environment as I have been doing for one's own shortcomings. The environment may be faulty, but—it seems to me that I have been, and the others I have known and observed have been, essentially *unteachable* in our attitudes. We have been romantic in that. We have lived on the legends of astonishing young men of genius (Rimbaud, Laforgue, Aubrey Beardsley). In subtle ways we have been hypnotized by the crude romantic notion of relatively untutored, spontaneous original genius. We were progressives whose development, we thought, would be accelerated by the laborious victories of the past. We wished to do new things without questioning very much whether we had acquired the power to do old things. Above all, in our conceit we would not be taught—after a mere year or two of prentice work. The fact that there was no qualified dictator is aside the point. Obeying the spirit of the times, we would have fled one had he appeared, no matter how fitted for the office.

The price we have paid for this early independence is to find ourselves now inadequately prepared for the next two or three decades of what should be our mature serious work. If you don't think so, transfer the whole nest of young American writers to the eighteenth century of English litera-

ture, put us down in the age of Swift and Dryden, Pope and Fielding and Addison, and Lady Mary Wortley-Montague and Sterne. There would be flashes, but we would not be set for a long competition with the thoroughly trained penmen of this time. . . .

I am dissatisfied then with my progress and the progress of my generation on two counts: first, because neither the milieu nor ourselves could teach us the necessity for a broad, many-sided professional training, and second, because we have thus far not perceived even in outline any great projects to engage our ambitions. It is perhaps worth saying this to the neophytes of twenty-one now busy imitating Hemingway and Cummings.

TRUSTEES OF POSTERITY*

By Amy Loveman

(Just as the copy for this text was being finally assembled, the following editorial by Amy Loveman, Managing Editor of *The Saturday Review*, appeared. Written a few years later than "The Shot to Acestes" which appears on page 388, it indicates that there is a definite tendency away from some of the literary practices which Professor Pattee deplored.)

Civilization is so marvellous a mechanism that it can accustom itself under necessity to anything. It can inure itself to war, and, hardly less difficult, again accommodate itself to peace. Or perhaps it would be more accurate to say inure itself to peace, since the readjustment that comes after struggle is a hardening rather than an easing process. It is a process which means the resolute acceptance of a changed order of existence, the determination to live down as well as live after dissension, the will to triumph over

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chaos. It implies a recovery of balance, measure, and perspective, and in that recovery of proportion a reassessing of human values. It is no mere accident, indeed, that a sudden tide of philosophic discussion has swept literature, but rather the signal and result of the recapture of a point of view which the war temporarily shattered. For when you no longer believe that man-made civilization has hopelessly foundered, and when you see in the kaleidoscopic progression of life pattern as well as lack of conformity, you are apt to reestablish man as the measure of all things. Once more he dominates his experiences and when that happens his philosophy and his literature alike tend away from naturalism.

That literature at least (for we shall leave philosophy to the philosophers for the present) has here in America been leading away of late from the naturalism of the immediately post-war years there can be no doubt. Daily it grows more evident that between the writing of even three years ago and today there is a sharp division. Our fiction—and fiction, of course, is more completely reflective of the standards of conduct and modes of thought of a people than any other single department of letters—shows an increasing withdrawal from the defeatism of recent years, a reawakening interest in the historical and romantic, and growing attraction to the robust and hearty. Partly, of course, this is so because a new generation has come to maturity, a generation born too late to have shared in the devastating mental experiences of war, let alone to have borne arms, and bound, like all youth, to be served. It demands of right the enjoyment of a belief that life is something more than mere incoherence, and looks upon the world with a spirit quickened by this faith to a tussle with existence, confident that the struggle is worth the waging. It takes as of course certain of the sanctions—or lack of sanctions—which its

immediate predecessors won for themselves with clamor and bitterness. It resents, to be sure, having the disillusion of its elders fastened upon its shoulders, yet it bears those elders gratitude for having removed the blinders from society. It is a generation open-eyed, unsentimental, outspoken, but a generation unembittered.

And what of its elders? They, indeed, are no more what once they were, for they have lived long enough since the war for knowledge to have relaxed their callow despair. Their disgust with life has abated, their despondency has sprung occasional sentimental or romantic tendrils. They remain a disillusioned generation but no longer a completely hopeless one. Henceforth, in fact, they should be a leaven rather than an irritant to literature and as such quite as useful as ever they were in the crusading days of their youth.

Prognostications are rarely more than hopes finding words, and dangerous at best. To venture a forecast of what the next twenty years in American literature may bring is to fly in the face of wisdom. Yet it may at least be said that whether or not the next two decades will produce great books they hold the hope of a literature more balanced and rounded, more nicely compounded of emotion and thought, than the literature that has gone before. For within the space of a single generation extraordinary experience has produced what is virtually two generations, both mature and both yet young, the one purged of all glamorous belief by the disaster of war and viewing the world somberly now rather than bitterly, and the other with the natural ardor of its youth tempered by the knowledge of the catastrophe in which it so narrowly escaped participation. Here surely should be the high seriousness which Matthew Arnold proclaimed the mark of great literature. Here should be both vision and understanding.

THE SHOT OF ACESTES*

By Fred Lewis Pattee

(As Professor of American Literature at Pennsylvania State College, Fred Lewis Pattee has been a prolific writer and editor, especially in the field of American Literature. He is especially fitted by temperament and by the breadth of his scholarship to present this last essay in the present text on literary standards.)

I refer, of course, to the fifth book of the *Æneid* and the famous games at the tomb of Anchises. The races had been run off, the boxing bout was over, and the archery event was on. There were four entries: Hyrtacus, Mnestheus, Eurytion, and Acestes—I will use only their sweater numbers. The target was a mast from one of the defeated racing boats or a fluttering dove tied to the masthead; the shooters could take their choice. The distance was not mentioned, but it was deemed ample. Admiral Æneas was sole judge and referee and distributor of prizes.

The shooting that followed was sensational. It was more; it was unique, for each of the contestants established a new record. No. 1, selecting the mast for his target, clove to a hair the very heart of it and instantly *ingenti sonuerunt omnia plausu*, or, in current United States, "the Teucri bleachers arose as one man and gave him the yell." A bull's-eye through the dead center—even the Sicilian townies could feel that. According to Vergil's record, No. 1 alone of all the four that day captured the crowd to the extent of a yell. No. 2 chose perforce the dove, but he would not kill the bird; he would not do a thing so ordinary as to shoot a tied dove. He aimed at the all but invisible string that bound the bird, and he cut it clean, freeing the captive, which instantly bounded into the sky. The bleachers sat in silence and watched the joyous creature. Then No. 3, holding his

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arrow on the taut string while he followed the bird in the air, at last let drive and pierced her among the very clouds. Her life she left among the deathless stars, but her lifeless form restored the arrow to its owner's hand. Acestes's turn to shoot and no mark. All hope of prize-winning gone, he felt free to cut loose and shoot not for the crowd, but for the gods who ruled his soul. Lifting his eyes from the solid mast and from the mast top, even from the low-lying cloud where had perished the dove, he drew his arrow to the head and did a thing no archer had ever dreamed of before; he launched the shaft with mighty arm straight into the Olympian blue where dwell the gods. And then—I'll leave the rich Latin, which no generation before mine would have insulted its readers by translating—the arrow, speeding swift among the thin clouds, burst into flame and, like a star unloosed from heaven, left behind it a long train of light.

The Trojan crowd, unable to fathom an unprecedented thing like that, sat in stolid silence awaiting the verdict of Æneas. They had not long to wait. To Acestes instantly he awarded the first prize. As it runs in the swift Latin hexameters, he loaded the man with great gifts and bound his temples with the laurel sacred alone to victors. To No. 3 he awarded second prize, for had he not brought down the loosened dove from the lofty sky? To No. 2 went third honors, for by his skill had he not cut the bonds that held the wingèd one to earth? But to No. 1, the darling of the bleachers, the one of them all who had felt most certain of the rich prize, to him he gave no award at all; only bare mention that he also had shot, for what had he done but make a mere bull's-eye on the earth-rooted target?

Whether Vergil intended it or not, the thing is a parable. It rings true; it actually happened; it is happening every day. It clears one's thinking; it sets up standards of measurement: Among men four attitudes towards life; in every

contest four types of shooters; for critics four rules for determining values. Let us apply them to the modern novel, the worst tangle in modern literature.

Hyrtacus shoots always first; eternally he stands for the younger generation; eternally he opens the tournament, the new literary period—for "literary period" is always synonymous with "generation." He is the loudest of all the shooters; he is young, he is confident: cocksureness sits on him like a chip on a shoulder. Eternally he cries that the old is outgrown, rule-bound, moribund; that manner and manners have obscured the Truth; that he stands for Nature, NATURE! Young Alexander Pope cried aloud for "Nature" before Wordsworth was born. Hyrtacus stands on the solid earth and shoots at the solid mast—*Main Street*, *Winesburg, Ohio*, *Sister Carrie*. He looks not up into the heavens: his business is with Life, the solid earth, the main-mast.

His slogan varies in form with every generation, with every decade even, but it never changes its substance. In the eighteen-eighties it was "realism," the realism of James and Howells—parlor realism; in the nineties it was "veritism," then "naturalism." There was young Frank Norris: "By God, I told them the Truth!" I hit the solid mast; I pierced the very heart of it. There was young Hamlin Garland: "I believe in the mighty pivotal present. I believe in the living and not the dead. Veritism deals with life face to face." And there was Eugène Véron, whom he quoted: "We care no longer for gods or heroes: we care for men." And behind them all Zola. Skip three decades: Dreiser, Lawrence, Sherwood Anderson—realism, starknakedism. Pick one at random to voice this new school of archery—Walter B. Pitkin, short-story coach, revamper of handbooks for correspondence courses, assembler of "As We Are," 1923. Read his entire preface; this is a fragment:

"It is partly a matter of scientific progress and partly one of intelligence level. Men read and write realism with a

steadily growing passion as a consequence of the swiftly widening and deepening culture of this century. . . . The man who has been touched with the spirit of science puts little trust in his so-called 'intuitions.' He suspects those moods which the poet calls 'deep spiritual insights.' . . . In a word, he is a realist as every scientist must be, whether he knows it or not. Ours is the first generation in which there has lived more than a handful of realistically minded men and women. . . . Our popular magazines are responding to a firm demand for realism by printing stories which tell the truth and shame the devil as well as horrify the herd. . . . Our better magazines furnish realism in proportion to the numerical power of highly intelligent readers among their *clientele*. So much for the general trend."

Thereupon he exemplifies "realism" by a series of tales so deadly faithful to the immediate contacts of life that some he declares are not fiction at all, but genuine biography, actually studies in actual back alleys, true to the minutest detail. He has held a clinic; he has made a dissection. You do not like such ghastly revelations? "Then we must debate this with you on the spot." You are belated in the march of evolution towards civilization; you are confessing your "lowbrowness"; the race evolves upwards into realism. "If you want the proof of this look at the history of our great literary successes."

I pick up a more recent book, *Midwest Portraits*, studies in recent Chicago archery, "literature" as up to date as a city reporter's notebook. Everywhere life viewed objectively and microscopically. Every author of them a tireless worker in contemporaneousness; every one of them self-hypnotized in umbilical contemplation, obsessed with the immediate contacts of life—shooters at the mast. To a man they have been trained in the school of metropolitan journalism—superficiality, headlong impressionism. No perspective, no poise, no serenity of soul, no skylights, no

silences. In the words of the author himself: "In nearly all of them a realistic or naturalistic method predominates. The city, dealing with the elementals of our lives, inspires men to a realistic mood." Here is the list of some of our latter-day classics as crowned by Chicago journalism:

Theodore Dreiser in *Sister Carrie* and *The Financier*, Robert Herrick in *The Web*, *The Common Lot*, and *The Memoirs of an American Citizen*; Edgar Lee Masters in *Children of the Market Place* and *Skeeters Kirby*, Henry Kitchell Webster in *An American Family*, Joseph Medill Patterson in *Rebellion* and *A Little Brother of the Rich*, Sherwood Anderson in *Marching Men* and *Winesburg, Ohio*; Ben Hecht in *Erik Dorn*, I. K. Friedman in *By Bread Alone*, Hamlin Garland in *Rose of Dutchers Coolly* and *A Daughter of the Middle Border* and Frank Norris in *The Pit*.

I laid down the book, with its level atmosphere of contempt for "the old household gods whose engraved portraits hang on schoolhouse walls," its hydrophobic rage at the bare mention of "Puritanism," always made synonymous with "Comstockery" and "cant," its youthful cocksureness, and its inference on every page that now for the first time in all history a group of young men had arisen that was telling the truth about human life, the truth—I laid it down in the mood, I fancy, of the Man of Wrath in "Elizabeth and her German Garden":

"I very much like to hear you talk together. It is all so young and fresh what you think and what you believe, and not of the least consequence to anyone."

Then suddenly a phrase on the jacket caught my eye and I got a thrill such as nothing in all the many chapters of the book had given me, a shock as from a live spark plug: "These are figures of importance to their own generation." Their own generation thinks these writings are literature;

the outpourings of these Chicago candidates for the booby prize their own generation thinks are literature. What does it matter what my own generation—the generation passing from the stage—thinks of these things: my generation does not own the next period and these young men do. Can it be possible that a period is coming in the history of literature when the shot of Hyrtacus is to win the tournament? God help us if it is true.

A tribe larger than that of Hyrtacus, though less noisy and far less cocksure, traces descent back to Mnestheus, No. 2 in the ancient contest. Sensation—to cut the unseen string and send the bird bounding into the sky—what a moment of thrill! Sentiment—the wingèd thing helplessly fettered to earth set free, cast unharmed into the heavens, its element—what a stroke at the sensibilities! The arrow was kind; it was aimed not to kill, but to free—humanitarianism! Sentimentalism comes from self-pity; it comes from imagination which looks at the butterfly, winged for the heavens, sinking deeper in the mud with every stroke of its beautiful wings, and sees itself; it comes from conviction innate in some men, if not in all, that the great average of men is fundamentally good even as one believes oneself to be good. And the crowd forever delights to sit and watch the joy of the wingèd thing restored to its native sky, and sometimes, while watching absorbedly this creature of the skies buffeting the winds and surmounting the utmost cloud, it even forgets for a time that its own feet are on the muddy earth. Sentimentalism, sensationalism, art for art's sake, art for mere entertainment's sake, popular romance—these in literature are some of the names for it. *Udolpho*, Laurence Sterne, N. P. Willis, *The Gunmaker of Moscow*, *The Lamplighter*, *Mrs. Stowe* and *Alton Locke*, E. P. Roe, Dick Davis, *Pollyanna*, O. Henry, and most of the women—this is the tribe of old Mnestheus.

And the heirs of Hyrtacus stand and jeer with a scorn

that deplores the poverty of our language in withering adjectives. Sickly sweet sentimentality! "Neruna!"—I forbear —but see Mencken *passim*. In early Victorian days the English Frasers let out on Fenimore Cooper with "He's a liar, a bilious braggart, a full jackass, an insect, a grub, and a reptile." And to a degree there is reason for their scorn. Of all debauchery that of emotion uncoupled with attendant action is the most deadening to the soul of man. William James has said the last word upon it. We remember his aristocrat who wept in the theater over the imaginary woes of the heroine while her own coachman was slowly freezing outside. And sensationalism—the freeing of the bird simply for the momentary thrill of it, again and yet again—is hardly less debauching. Go to the movies and look not at the screen but at the people. Purposeless watching for the cut string and the suddenly bounding bird, weltering in a smother of sentiment and leaving the dishes unwashed at home—castles in the air with no foundations at all upon the earth—continue it long and your soul, if you still have one, withers and dies.

But always Mnestheus wins over Hyrtacus. He caught at least a glimpse of the divine blue; he saw for a moment at least the loosened dove of man's soul mounting into the upper air, and for a moment at least he felt the freedom of the gods—he was himself a god, with all the boundless sky as his demesne.

The tribe of Eurytion is dubbed by D. H. Lawrence in his amazing new book, *Classical American Literature*, the "killers." With no thought of alluding to Vergil's parable, he has this of James Fenimore Cooper:

"This is Natty, the white forerunner. A killer. As in *Deerslayer*, he shoots the bird that flies in the high, high sky, so that the bird falls out of the invisible into the visible, dead; he symbolizes himself. He will bring the bird of the

spirit out of the high air. He is the stoic killer of the old great life."

Good! It is a shot of Eurytion: it hits the mark. Bliss Perry, also with no thought of his Vergil, has voiced the same thought:

"Flaubert once compared our human idealism to the flight of a swallow; at one moment it is soaring towards the sunset, at the next moment some one shoots it and it tumbles into the mud with blood upon its glistening wings. The sudden poignant contrast between light, space, freedom, and the wounded, bleeding bird in the mud is the very essence of tragedy."

The best example is "Don Quixote." Once men dreamed honestly of chivalry and tried to practice it and the whole race took a step in advance; then Cervantes shot the bird down into the barnyard mud and we laugh and jeer. Anatole France in *L'île des Penguins* shoots down the old great life of France and sneers and jeers at the dead bird and they give him the Nobel Prize for his marksmanship. The human soul takes as naturally to the upper air as the wingèd dove; it is incurably romantic and idealistic, and a Eurytion stands on every street corner shooting at it as if it were an obscene bird. The American Mark Twain sends a Connecticut Yankee into King Arthur's court and we classify his book as humor. He catches a glimpse of the old great life of the passing American frontier—romance with the golden light upon it; a glimpse again of the marvelous romance of Domremy and its peasant saint, and he dies growling curses on "the damned human race." The Puritan tradition deals with one of the loftiest flights of the Anglo-Saxon soul, and no young archer to-day with arrow so blunt that he cannot bring it down into the mud. The typical Eurytion of the younger generation let us call James Cabell. Life is tragedy; a glimpse of heaven and then a nose-dive into the dunghill

dead; the "comedy of disenchantment"; let us rather call it the tragedy, the supremest tragedy man knows. I mean Cabell is the tragedy. The man who sees no gods above his clouds is dead and in hell. Prometheus brought down from the Olympic zone fire for the blessing of mortals; Mnestheus also brought down the heavenly thing, but he brought it down dead—not fire, but ashes—and, having delivered this monstrous gift, he stands and sneers: "These are your gods, O Israel." Life is a monstrous joke: look at these ashes.

Yet Eurytion is infinitely more deserving of the prize than Hyrtacus: he at least has looked higher than the muddy earth; he is more deserving than Mnestheus, for he did not stand impotently and dream of the skies. He brought down something out of the unseen, even though he brought it dead.

And now Acestes. His tribe is almost as small as that of the Mohicans. Even one Acestes in a generation makes a people rich. His gift is to see beyond eyesight, to bring the fire of the gods down alive. Standing with Acestes and looking into the invisible blue, one begins to understand many hard sayings of the philosophers. We catch a glimpse of what Melville meant when speaking of Hawthorne: "Irving is a grasshopper to him—putting the souls of the two men together." Irving was of the tribe of Mnestheus. We jeer no longer at Barrett Wendell's Harvard dictums: "The writings of Irving, of Cooper, of Bryant never dealt with deeply significant matters," and "In the work of Poe nothing was produced that touched seriously on God's eternities." And we understand Thoreau even in such Orphic sayings as: "We should see that our dreams are the solidest facts that we know," and "My actual life is a fact, in view of which I have no occasion to congratulate myself; but for my faith and aspiration I have respect."

Great literature is always an arrow launched into the blue by an archer who sought no prize save that furnished by his own soul, who followed no precedents, but who shot to bring

down alive the unseen powers, call them gods or call them what you will. Novalis sought the blue flower; Maeterlinck the bluebird, and they sought it not in the mud of the swamps. Thoreau had lost among other things a dove with wings. His dream was "to discover the sources of the Nile, perchance the Mountains of the Moon." Never was he a naturalist: rather was he a supernaturalist.

Always somewhere in the great classic comes the stage direction, often implied, "Enter the gods." The arrow kindles in the sky and becomes a trail of light for generations to come. Melville wrote *Moby Dick* to suit his own imperious soul and two generations later its trail was burning brighter than when he first shot it. Whitman, not the earlier poet of the body, but the later voicer of the soul, created his splendid *Passage to India* out of his own life without models and without expectation of reward or recognition. Thoreau for years wrote his journal daily for himself and the gods. He had no thought of publication. Emerson's most quoted line is "hitch your wagon to a star," and he holds the commanding place that he does to-day simply because his whole life long he tried for himself to make this celestial connection.

There are those who fear that Acestes is dead and that in America at least he has left no descendants. After reading a book like *Midwest Portraits* one is inclined to agree with them. But if Acestes is dead then is the soul of America dead. Inconceivable! The Cabells and the Andersons and the Dreisers and the Menckens rule the moment by their clatter and their cocksureness, but their day is brief. A donkey braying in the back lot may drown for me the music of the spheres—if I will let it. These creatures of the moment have as little power to realize the possibilities and the harmonies and the wingéd powers of the human soul, its ability to triumph over the merely physical, compelling as the physical unquestionably is, as they have to wear the shoes of St. Francis. They see but the mud and

they bathe in the mud and they cry to the world: "Come on in; the mud is fine. Everybody's in it. Look, here is a sample of it, warranted genuine. You can't stay out anyway, even if you want to." But Acestes looks away from the mud and talks of the glory of man. His eyes are upon the gods beyond the clouds, and when he shoots his mighty arrow becomes a burning pathway across the heavens lighting the race in its groping progress upwards towards the gods.

CHAPTER 9

SOME LITERARY TERMS AND THEIR MEANINGS

> Man names the world, himself, and all that is therein,
> The incantation of the word calls from the dark
> The phantoms of the mind, insights, analogies,
> Conceptions, ratiocinations, memories,—
> Bodiless wizardries whose air-drawn lineaments
> Compel the ages.
>
> —Hovey, *Taliesin*

A canyon cuts into the mountain a short distance from where I write. It may be described in terms of geology and earth-crust history, in terms of the trout fisherman, or of the botanist, or of the forest ranger, or the hydro-electric engineer. A painter may show some fragment of it touched by the rose-purple glow of evening or by the silver witchery of the moon. He may paint the dark of the pines or the white of the aspens. Any of these descriptions may be consistent and adequate to the purpose. But it is possible to ignore them all and to direct the summer tourist to the plain road which runs through the canyon, and to tell him where to stop for the most satisfying views of its beauties and possibilities. Perhaps, when he has once seen them, he will feel the need for some knowledge of the terms in which they may be adequately described.

Literature is somewhat like the canyon. Discussions of the infinite beauties and possibilities of literature are futile until one has taken the path that leads into the heart of the wonders, the path of wide reading. But once one finds himself surrounded by the wealth of half-perceived values, he welcomes some technical descriptions. It may be well to

seek for somewhat clearer meanings for a number of terms which have been used frequently in this text, and which occur constantly in any discussions of literature.

It may seem that these terms should have been defined at the beginning of the study of literature. But a list of technical terms with their definitions is usually not very exciting reading, and abstract definitions are seldom of value in a preliminary survey of any subject. One arrives most surely at the meaning of any term by observing it in its natural context in literature or speech. We are concerned here not only with the legitimate meanings of the terms, but also with negative definitions, with the elimination of popular misconceptions which are often confusing.

Imagination

Perhaps few common terms are so constantly misunderstood as the word imagination. To most students, it seems to suggest a free and undisciplined association of images, pleasing perhaps, but without serious function in life. To the man of the street, imagination is something to be avoided —he wants to stick to facts! Imagination is often said to be peculiarly characteristic of children and of primitive man.

However, if you have observed how the word has been used in the discussions in this book, you will realize that it has not been used with these meanings and connotations. Imagination is just one way of thinking about our experiences. Biologists have said that imagination takes its rise in man from the surplusage of vital energy over that needed for the maintenance of life and the perpetuation of the race —from the vital margin of safety. This surplusage of energy becomes the means of further adaptation and of social evolution. William Patten gives a vivid description of the function and nature of imagination in the following extracts:

"This supplementary nervous activity initiates a new kind of vital action that may be largely independent of the ex-

ternal world it tends to portray. With its aid, it is possible for man to construct image chains which tend to follow the same order as those produced by experience, and which thus tend to correspond with the actual order of external events. These retrospective images are tested, readjusted, and approved or disapproved by supplementary experience to form a broader and more secure basis for prospective action.

"These mental pseudopodia, this halo of mental outreachings into the past and future, into history and prophecy, enable man to project himself as it were into the limitless expanse of the universal time and universal place in search of those more comprehensive truths, or realities, which he calls natural laws.

"This constructive usage of the imagination, ever checked and reoriented by observation and experiment; this matching of the inevitable logic of growth and evolution in the outer world with a logical sequence of self-sustaining mental processes, is the very essence of science and of spiritual freedom. It is the only means we have of reconstructing the unwritten past, and anticipating or prophesying the future. It is our only escape from the narrow prison in which the physical body is confined, to universal freedom and to larger fields of profit. . . .

"In man, the chief mechanisms of plant and animal life are still utilized, but they are heavily reinforced by his new instrument, the imagination, the eyes and legs of his spiritual body, the real seven-league boots and the helmet of invisibility with which he annihilates time, and space, and matter, and with which, in effect, he may project himself far beyond the narrow confines of his physical sanctuary into realms his physical body may never enter.

"Imagination opens the gates of the universe. It is life's open sesame to world freedom and to the accumulated treasures of the world's experience. In his search for wisdom, it gives man the instant power to look over the edge of yes-

terday and the top of tomorrow into the abyss of universal time; to fly through and beyond all physical barriers into the infinite expanse of universal space; to explore the dead past and invade the germinating future.

"Ever checked and corrected, ever stimulated by its increment of power, it is the common agency by which man is perpetually upbuilding, renovating, and systemizing his science, his philosophy, and his religion; short-circuiting the roundabout methods of chance, and hastening the discovery of the constructive way."[1]

Because the word imagination contains the word *image*, students sometimes think that it refers only to the combination of visual images into new wholes. If, however, you attempt to create in your imagination a picture of your childhood home on the evening before Christmas, you will likely find that the "image" contains many elements which are not visual. You tend to re-live for the moment some of the sensations you experienced on that happy occasion—the cold outside and the warmth within, the sounds of voices and of noisy toys, the taste of Christmas candies, the excitement and activity which pervaded the entire physical organism.

The imagination of primitive man performed its most important function, perhaps, in the creation of language—unless language may be said to have created the imaginative power itself. It also made possible the simple artifacts which lessened the rigors of physical existence, and the stories which were at once the records of his mental and spiritual growth, and the prophecies of further development. It was undisciplined and feeble in just the same way that his reasoning powers were undeveloped and feeble. Progress from a primitive to a civilized society involves the development of all techniques of thinking. Imagination still plays the creative rôle in the evolutionary processes. But where once it

[1] Reprinted by permission from William Patten, *The Grand Strategy of Evolution*, Boston, Richard G. Badger, 1920, pp. 292-295.

found its typical expression in the work of the poet, the painter, and the sculptor, now it finds many effective media. "The Da Vinci of today," writes William McFee, in *An Ocean Tramp*, "leaves his Last Supper undepicted; but he drives a Tube through the London clay. Cellini no longer casts a Perseus and alternates a murder with a Trattaro; he builds engines and railroads and ships. Michael Angelo smites no sibyls from the living stone, but he has carved the face of the very earth to his design. And though no fair youth steps forth to paint the unearthly nimbus-light around the brows of his beloved madonna, I count it fair exchange that from every reef and point of this our sea-girt isle there shines a radiance none can watch without a catching of the breath."

The imagination of the writer registers itself in the more or less vivid and consistent and richly ornamented intuition which his work presents. It may create a many-sided character involved in revelatory action—a Macbeth, or it may present a simple emotion in a brief lyric. Read some poem, perhaps "The Road Not Taken"[2] by Robert Frost, or "Gloucester Moors" by William Vaughn Moody, and note the writer's imaginative power in the consistency of the symbol as a whole, and in the richness and vividness of the detail.

"Imagination then is the power that creates," says J. W. Mackail, in *Lectures on Poetry*, "in so far as creation is within human power. It is the likeness or echo of the divine creative power; like it, according to its measure, it gives shape and substance to what had neither, what was without form and void." Lascelles Abercrombie, in *The Theory of Poetry*, says that all poetry begins as imaginative experience. "And by 'imagination,' I do not mean that it belongs necessarily to the unsubstantial day-dreams of pure fancy; I mean an experience which, long after its first

[2] See page 217.

occurrence, has been continued in the poet's mind by imagination—by the power, namely, of holding something constantly before the mind in keen and vivid definition. I mean, also, when I call this experience imaginative, to imply very emphatically that it has not been prolonged as a train of reasoning or reflection, not as an intellectual topic, but simply as experience immediately enjoyable or exciting in itself."

One of the chief values to be had from the reading of great literature is the stimulation and control of the imagination of the reader; for it is through the imagination that he frees himself from the tyranny of immediate sense experience, comes into vital, constructive contact with his fellows, builds an "unprecedented attitude of mind to cope with unprecedented conditions and to utilize unprecedented knowledge."

Emotion and Literature

One universally recognized characteristic of esthetic activity is its ever present pleasurable emotional tone. Students constantly speak of the "kick" they get from a movie. Writers speak of "esthetic emotion," of the "feeling that is aroused by art," of the desire of the artist "to fix a passing emotional state," of "the instinctive tendency to express overmastering emotion." George E. Woodberry wrote that emotion is the "first radical trait of poetry," and "this to so marked a degree that it is characteristically described as madness." Some critics have maintained that the mark which distinguishes *belles lettres* from non-artistic writing is that the former is directed toward the emotions and the latter toward the intellect, or, more crudely stated, literature appeals to the heart and other writing to the head. It seems certain that many writers, Poe for example, made it their aim to stir violently the emotions of the reader. Most popular discussions have assumed that the two criteria of great literature are intensity and universality of emotional appeal.

The attempt to make emotional appeal the criterion of

art is on the same intellectual level as the attempt to make the pleasure of eating the chief reason for going to dinner, or the basis of the work of the dietician. If intensity of appeal were the mark of great art then the average movie thriller must rank above *The Divine Comedy*. And universality of appeal in literature of any kind seems to be the creation of the fancy of the critic. Tolstoi, who made universality of appeal the criterion of great art, found himself under the necessity of admitting that, in actual life, articles of personal adornment—nose rings, etc.—are the art works of widest appeal, and, therefore, he naïvely concludes that they should be given higher rank than is usually accorded them. If universality of appeal, or anything approaching it, is the criterion of literary value, then the "sob-sister" page in the newspaper is a greater work of art than the poems of Edwin Arlington Robinson. The fact is that history records no work of art of any kind which ever possessed even approximate universality of appeal.

Arthur James Balfour, in *Criticism and Beauty*, states the facts in contradiction to this theory: "Difference of race, difference of age, different degrees of culture among men of the same race and the same age, individual idiosyncracy and collective fashion occasion, or accompany, the widest possible divergence of aesthetic feeling. The same work of art which moves one man to admiration moves another to disgust; what arouses the enthusiasm of one generation leaves another hostile or indifferent."

This naïve and widespread emotionalism in the study and teaching of literature has other fallacies to its credit. Students of reading are often told that they "must feel the emotion" presented, if they wish to read well. Confused amateur actors are enjoined "to feel the part," to feel the emotion the character is supposed to experience.

A few years ago, a well known actress was to appear in one of our cities. Some of the club women of the city wrote

asking her not to play a certain part for which she was billed. Their argument was: since it is necessary for an actor to feel the emotions of the character in order to impersonate it effectively, and since this particular character experienced such degrading emotions, it would be a degradation of the actor's personality to subject herself to them. If this reasoning were sound, we should have to prohibit the presentation of most of classic drama. If it were based upon fact, no woman would dare to play the part of Desdemona! The actress graciously thanked the women for their interest, but she assured them that it is not a part of the actor's duties to feel the emotions of the character being portrayed; it is rather to *represent* those emotions—a very different thing.

It seems safe to say that any work of art which appeals so strongly to the emotions that the judgment of the hearer or reader is paralyzed must take low rank. That rank is based upon two facts: (1) that intelligence is the primary instrument of social evolution, not emotion; and (2) strong emotional appeal is, perhaps, the easiest effect for any artist to produce, and is seldom sought except by the unscrupulous. These facts were recognized some time ago by whoever made the remark that much popular fiction is a mental anesthetic under the influence of which the reader will permit any kind of operation on his intellect. Strong emotion which does not lead to the test and correction of action—physical action or mental action—is suggestive, at least, of a pathological situation.

But there is emotion, always, associated with the writing or the reading of literature. A given work of art may become emotionally conditioned for susceptible people as the result of hearing repeatedly the statements that it is "profound," "the world's greatest drama," "the work of a master," and so on. These people may experience a truly profound emotion in the presence of a scene from Shake-

speare, a scene so bunglingly presented as to be ludicrous, just because they have been told impressively that they ought to be moved by this "great actor"—to quote the press agent's opinion—in the greatest play of the greatest of the world's dramatists! The legitimate emotion we receive from a work of art, however, arises from our imaginative response to the symbol presented by the artist. This emotion may gain in strength either from rigid limitation of appeal, or from the richness of content in the suggested image.

It is possible for either a writer or a speaker, by means of repetition of image, by rhythm, by monotony of sound, to produce in the mind of the hearer or reader a state of fascination similar to the centering of consciousness produced by the hypnotist, or, among savages, by the rhythm of the drums and the dance. This is the effect usually sought by Poe, and often strikingly attained, as in "The Raven." On the other hand, the writer may depend for his effect upon his power to produce in the reader a succession of moments rich in content and therefore accompanied by a more pervasive and a more sustained emotion. The difference between the two types of response to art are comparable to different possible physical emotions. Highly seasoned food may produce an intensely pleasurable emotion. In contrast with this localized and easily perverted enjoyment is the richer emotion which might result from a brisk walk in the fresh morning air to the top of a hill, and a view from its summit. Here the emotion results from accelerated physical functioning, from the harmonious stimulation of the eye, the ear, etc. It is scarcely conceivable that this latter emotion could be perverted. So, in the realm of art, intense emotion may be produced by a clever technician by rigidly narrowing the range of appeal; but greater art calls out in the perceiver that feeling of pleasure which normally

accompanies a moment of consciousness rich and harmonious in content. The art of Shakespeare or of William Vaughn Moody, at its best, has this richness of ideational suggestion. It is because much of Poe's work lacks this richness of vital suggestion that it must always have a more limited appeal.

The worth of a bit of literature or a play cannot then be predicated upon the fact that there has or has not been a general and vivid emotional response to it, but rather upon the quality of the emotion aroused. "Emotions are of two kinds," writes G. N. Stratton, in *Developing Mental Power*, "strength-giving, *sthenic* emotions, like cheer, self-confidence, good-will, love; and the strength-taking, *asthenic* emotions, like fear, shame, gloom. Even the weakening emotions have their place and use; there are times when we should be checked in mid-career. Yet such emotions are good only by exception and for a short time. The strength-giving emotions are for long and steady use; they add impetus, they put driving force into the machinery of interest and purpose."

Perhaps the best thing we can do with this question of emotion and literature is to forget about it. This discussion would not have appeared here at all, but for the fact that so much rubbish is constantly spoken and written on the subject. If you imaginatively re-live a bit of life adequately symbolized by a writer, the emotion will take care of itself. The fuller and truer that imaginative moment, the more pleasurable the experience. But the reader who finds himself reading definitely for the emotional thrill is well on the way to intellectual and emotional dissolution. The obsession with emotion which characterized much of the teaching of literature a few years ago is, perhaps, one of the chief causes of the emotional debauchery which is so distressing in much of present popular fiction and drama.

"True to Life"

The statement that a bit of literature is or is not "true to life" comes more often from the lips of college students than from the pens of professional critics. "True to life" seems to be the characteristic of a work of art which meets the special approval of the "plain man." It is the "common sense" standard of judgment. It is the standard which you will hear applied in one form or another many times during the year. It sounds reasonable. It is very likely to be false. Let us examine it.

When Freshman S. Jones approves a play on the ground that it is "true to life," he is usually approving it for qualities which please the box office, and which are, at the same time, the despair of more intelligent critics. His approval usually means two things: (1) that he has had the childish pleasure of recognizing familiar characters and phrases, and (2) that the writer has seen only such aspects of life as Jones is in the habit of seeing. The recognition of familiar people and situations is one element of the pleasure which books and plays give children. Writers of books for children take advantage of this fact when they write books in series, each new book relating further adventures of a well known hero. Makers of popular dramatic entertainment depend upon the same fact when they use stereotyped characters. The immature and uncultivated mind is puzzled by any new situation or new character evaluation. It approves variety only in superficial matters. When Freshman Jones approves the play on the basis of what he calls its "truth to life," it is safe to assume that this pleasure of recognition is a determining element in his judgment. This pleasure of recognition can be a quality of his reaction only when the writer has seen no more subtle values in the life he is picturing than Jones habitually sees.

When F. S. Jones leaves college and becomes a writer of

plays or short stories or novels, he may carry with him his standard of "true to life" in the literary philosophy that it is the business of the writer to "picture life as he sees it." Certainly he cannot picture life as he does not see it, though he may see it as it surely is not. This literary philosophy can be interpreted on several levels. On the lowest level, it is taken to mean that the writer must be merely a reporter, setting down the surfaces of characters as he has seen them in the life around him. Hence arise the cruder forms of realism and naturalism. But art is of necessity selective. And the only excuse for writing, except the financial excuse, is to select and organize experience so as to show more than appears on the surface, more than the average man sees. Even the most "realistic" of writers selects such things as seem to him important. In actual practice, however, the realistic writer has been prone to select the most distressing phases of life, not for the purpose of showing a new truth about life but for the purpose of giving the reader a shock which will make him talk about the book and stimulate sales. Fortunately, during the past few years there has been a general revolt against the intellectual dishonesty of the cruder forms of naturalism. They will, however, always hang on the lower levels of art. It is hoped that F. Sophomore Jones will have passed beyond the stage of development in which literature presenting merely the familiar surfaces of life will give satisfactory experience.

Inspiration and Literature

It is quite possible that the average freshman has thought little about the word *inspiration*. However, he cannot read much about literature without meeting it, and perhaps becoming confused by it. The word has two legitimate meanings. It may refer to the incident which suggested to the artist the idea which he developed. A view of Millet's picture was the experience which "inspired" Edwin Markham

to write "The Man with the Hoe." The other meaning of the word is less definite, and it harks back to primitive life. When certain individuals among primitive peoples developed a technique which enabled them to produce results whose causes were not apparent to ordinary men, these results were attributed to supernatural powers, to inspiration—the fortunate man had been "breathed into" by the gods. As a result of this "in-breathing" his message was thought to have super-human wisdom, and its truth must not be questioned by ordinary mortals. Churton Collins speaks of this meaning of the word as "the old doctrine of the Greeks, so frequently insisted on by Plato, that the poetical faculty, when genuine, is innate, the immediate gift of Heaven, simple inspiration, holy madness, having as an impulsive power no connection at all with art, not to be learned nor in any other way than by divine transmission to be attained. And so Plato speaks of the poet as bereft of reason but filled with divinity; he is the seer, he is the prophet; he discerns in the light of inspiration; he speaks for he is the interpreter of Divinity." This meaning has been woven into the very texture of our language and our thought, and has colored most of the writing about literature throughout the ages. It may occur in a vague metaphor, as in Lowell's "building a bridge from Dreamland for his lay." Or it may be consciously present in the writer's philosophy, as in most of the critical writings of Emerson, and in Mrs. Browning's "The poets are the only truth tellers left to God." Or, again, it may merely be the implicit basis for a writer's tirade against any censorship over his work.

So long as the word is used in recognition of the mystery which underlies all life, the divinity in all creative thinking, there can be no objection to it. But when used to close argument about the value of a work of art on the ground that its "inspiration" takes it out of the realm of social values to be discussed by the uninspired, then the word

becomes dangerous. There is no basis in fact for the assumption that the work of even the greatest artist is mystically infused with a truth which can be socially evaluated only by unwarranted intrusion into some artistic holy of holies. Here again, Arthur James Balfour may be permitted to say the last, realistic word about the artist:

"Optimism and pessimism; materialism and spiritualism; theism, pantheism, and atheism; morality and immorality; religion and irreligion; lofty resignation and passionate revolt—each and all have inspired or helped to inspire the creators of artistic beauty."

Classicism

The bits of literature read in the schools are often called "classics," though many of them are in no sense classic in style or in content. The result is, often, a confused notion of the meaning of the word. For the western world the classics are, first of all, the writings of the great periods of Greece and Rome, the writings which served as models during the Renaissance. When we speak of a modern work of art as being marked by classic qualities, we imply that it possesses just those characteristics of good sense, just balance of intellect and emotion, sincerity, fine finish, and health which belonged to Greek and Latin literatures at their best.

Sainte-Beuve somewhere speaks of a classic as "an author who has enriched the human mind, increased its treasure, and caused it to advance a step; who has discovered some moral and not equivocal truth, or revealed some eternal passion in that where all seemed known and discovered; who has expressed his thought, observation, or invention, in no matter what form, only provided it be broad and great, refined and sensible, sane and beautiful in itself; who has spoken to all in his own peculiar style, a style which is

found to be also that of the whole world, a style new without neologism, new and old, easily contemporary with all time."

Romanticism

The word "romance" was first applied to the stories of love and adventure written during the middle ages in the countries of southern Europe which spoke the romance languages—languages descended from the language of Rome. These stories were usually characterized by violent passions, unusual adventures, the free play of imagination, rich ornamentation, and lack of rigid form. The word romantic later came to be applied to any literature which presented unfamiliar scenes, peoples, emotions. It does not, however, necessarily imply the absence of classic qualities. The adventures of Ulysses are romantic enough, though they are recorded in a great classical poem.

A romantic period in literary history is usually a period of revolt against a too rigidly conventional classicism. It marks a new search after things that have the lure of the unknown, after the unexpected, the emotionally vivid.

Sentimentalism

The normal emotional response of a sensitive temperament to a vividly realized situation is spontaneous and wholesome. It seeks its natural outlet in action, mental or physical. But when emotion is cultivated for the sake of the thrill, of the subjective experience, it becomes sentimentalism. In a period when the great writers are predominantly romantic, as in our own nineteenth century, it is but natural that the lesser writers should be steeped in sentiment. Any bit of literature in which the emotion does not have adequate intellectual basis degenerates into the sensational. The sobbing songs and choking voices one sometimes hears over the radio or at the "talkies" are typical examples of sentimental decadence. "When art is used," says James Mickel Wil-

liams, in *Principles of Social Psychology*, "to stir impulses which, because of a purposeless life, are not otherwise in action, esthetic appreciation loses its spontaneity and degenerates into sentimentalism."

Realism and Naturalism

Every artist worthy the name attempts to express the truth as he sees it. The romantic writer usually begins with what for him are unquestioned truths, and his attention is given primarily to their expression in beautiful and effective symbols. But most human values come in time to be questioned. Realism arises out of the mood of question. The realist asks that all values be made to square with the facts of life as he sees them. When he writes, he tends to present the facts and to permit readers to make their own evaluations and generalizations. He seeks fidelity to nature, presentation uncolored by sentiment, objectivity. The mood of the realist leads to a desirable clarity of vision, a sense of reality, the testing of conventional ways of thinking and acting, the disassociation of non-productive associations of ideas.

In discussions of literature, realism is sometimes opposed to romanticism, but the two words are not mutually exclusive. Realism is sometimes a matter of literary technique rather than of mood and materials. Barrie's *Peter Pan* is realistic in technique, and at the same time delightfully romantic in mood.

Realistic technique in the hands of writers who have no fundamental idealism readily degenerates into naturalism, sensationalism, the search for the surface facts of life which will galvanize into activity the jaded nerves of the blasé sensualist. Robert Frost has said somewhere that there are two types of realist: "the one who offers a good deal of dirt with his potato to show that it is a real one, and the one who is satisfied with a potato brushed clean."

Realism in literature is subject to the illusive danger that it appears to be an easy form of composition, that any one can look at life and write what he sees. As a result, much literature in every age presents more dirt than potato. Lafcadio Hearn called attention to the fact, as have many other critics, that an exact copy of nature is not true art according to the Greek ideal of beauty. Hence he says, "I believe that the school of naturalism belongs to the low order of literary creation."

Decadence in Literature

The decadence of a literary form results from the same forces which bring about the decay of any other social institution. When conditions arise which withdraw the best minds from the control of any institution, as from the English theater between 1620 and 1642, it is left to the devices of the inferior minds, and the evidences of decadence are not difficult to see.

Among the marks of decadence in a literary form are: (1) the absence of any conscious social function, (2) over emphasis upon technique, (3) appeal only to a sophisticated clique, (4) over emotionalism, (5) preoccupation with pathological and degenerate phases of life, (6) commercialism. This lowering of the tone usually makes for a temporary popularity, because it is easier to meet and amuse people on or just below their normal level than it is to show them a finer way of life and enjoyment.

Every form of commercial popular entertainment is subject to a constant pull downward. The various literary forms, when exploited for the emotional stimulation of people who lack intellectual resources, are no exception. Fortunately, in every generation, there are writers with a sane idealism who gain their strength from resistance to the forces of decadence, and who keep their work on a constructive level.

Morality in Literature

Many writers have said that art is a-moral; i.e., that it is always without moral implications. Many teachers have objected to "moralizing" the teaching of literature. These attitudes arise from a complete misunderstanding of the nature and function of art and literature, though they are, perhaps, wholesome protests against the idea that morality is a matter of deducing moralizing generalizations.

The function of literature seems to be the organization of experience into forms which show its true significance. This is the very essence of morality.

The immoral in literature does not arise from the particular phase of life which may be presented by the writer, but from any false emphasis, any undue sentimentalizing of experience, any evaluation which tends to fix in the mind of the reader what Stratton called *asthenic*, or weakening, emotions.

In this respect, literature is like food. It is good, not because it gives pleasure to the palate—though that may be very desirable, but because it makes for a more wholesome life.

The Appreciation of Literature

The aim of the work outlined in this text is to increase the appreciation of literature. The word *appreciation*, however, has vague meaning in the minds of many readers. It is often thought to be a synonym of enjoyment. If a reader enjoys a book or a play, he assumes that he appreciates it. The root meaning of the word, however, implies a just estimate, a recognition of all the significant elements involved.

Perhaps the first step in the appreciation of a poem, for instance, is vivid response to its music, to its symbols, to its words—an imaginative *realization* of the thought and emotion of the poet. Many who read Tennyson's "Cross-

ing the Bar" do not build in the imagination a picture of the harbor at evening, the sailing of the ship with all its sights, sounds, and emotions, the tide moving across the harbor bar, etc. Instead they react with uncertain emotions to the tone of the poem and to the vague emotional connotation of such phrases as "moaning of the bar," "too full for sound or foam," "boundless deep," "turn again home," "sadness of farewell." In other words, they do not *read* the poem at all, do not appreciate it even though they may experience a pleasurable emotion.

Literary appreciation implies, first, a sensitiveness to word meanings. One of the chief purposes of the work outlined in Part II of this text is to develop necessary awareness of words and their meaning overtones. It implies, second, the habit of imaginatively reconstructing the characters, situations, and symbols presented by the writer. It involves, further, constant contact with significant literature.

But perhaps the most important element in the development of literary appreciation is the cultivation of the senses —the power to see the shapes and colors of things and the way they move, to hear the sounds of things—especially the sounds of the human voice with all its shadings. "No refining of one's taste in matters of art or literature," says John Cowper Powys in *The Meaning of Culture*, "no sharpening of one's powers of insight in matters of science or psychology, can ever take the place of one's sensitiveness to the life of the earth. This is the beginning and the end of a person's education. Art and literature have been shamefully abused, have been perverted from their true purpose, if they do not conduce to it. The cultivation in one's inmost being of a thrilling sensitiveness to Nature"—and, one must add, to people, human nature—"is a slow and very gradual process. The first conscious beginnings of it in early childhood are precious beyond words as the origin of dominant memories; but the more deliberately we dis-

cipline our sensitive grasp of these things, the deeper our pleasure in them grows." This sensitiveness to the life around us furnishes us with the necessary vivid group of experiences out of which we may build an appreciation for literature and art, and constant contact with the best in literature and art tends to increase our sensitiveness to and appreciation for life.

APPENDIX

A METHOD OF WORK

The two chief obstacles in the way of the beginning worker in intellectual fields are: (1) lack of knowledge of effective techniques, and (2) lack of consecutiveness.

The first mechanical technique of the intellectual worker is that of note-taking. Notes may be in several forms. They may be notes of lectures, summaries of articles or books read, notes of facts found in reading, records of personal observations. Of course the notes taken during a lecture must be made hurriedly and with no thought as to form or order—the order is determined by the order of presentation. The student needs to practice the art of selecting the vital parts of the presentation and omitting or indicating briefly the illustrations used by the speaker to clarify the meaning. The making of summaries of articles is a useful exercise and helps to fix the line of thought in mind. But notes of this kind are merely records of the thinking of others, and are not aids to your own thinking.

The most important notes are those you take while you are trying to think through some subject which interests you. Early in the study of any topic, you need to determine the points which you must know in order that you may think clearly about it. For instance, if you are studying language, you will wish to know: (a) how words get meaning; (b) how meanings change in the life of the individual or of the race; (c) how words change form; (d) how new words arise, etc.; you cannot otherwise know much about language. These headings become guide topics for the notes you need to make. The notes themselves may consist of illuminating sentences from books you read, facts recorded

by others, or observations and opinions of your own. Whatever the source of the note, the form should be the same for all notes. The essential characteristics of good notes—notes which will assist you in thinking—are the following: (a) only one note should appear on one sheet of paper or on one card; (b) the note should be accurate to the last detail—if a quotation, it should be complete, correctly spelled and punctuated; (c) there should be a guide word at the top—one of the sub-topics which are necessary to the understanding of the subject as a whole; and (d) complete bibliographical material at the close so that the quotation can be instantly identified and located if necessary. College students waste more time in taking inadequate notes than in any other way.

The size of the paper upon which the note is recorded may vary according to circumstances. Many students use cards 4″ by 6″ and have a file for them. Others use pages of a loose-leaf notebook of convenient size. If you are looking forward to a life of intellectual work, you should use the standard page of approximately 8½″ by 11″. The filing system you use for pages of this size will permit of your filing pamphlets, magazine articles, etc., along with other materials. Whatever size of paper you use, be sure that all notes are on uniform sheets.

When the student makes and files notes in this way on topics which are vital to his thinking, he will find that they become a permanent aid in his work. Notes taken in the freshman year prove valuable in the senior year. Notes taken in one subject supplement notes taken in another. Such notes are like capital to a business man. The student who takes notes of this kind will not contribute them at the close of the year to brighten the flames of the annual bonfire.

When notes are taken in this way, it is easy to sort them into groups dealing with specific subjects, to arrange them

in logical order, and to prepare a good outline. After that, the writing of a class paper is not a difficult task. It is as foolish for a student to attempt to do intellectual work without the aid of such a mechanical technique as it would be for a business man to attempt to conduct his business without the aid of classifications, filing systems, typewriters, etc.

The most effective way of making your notes, whether they are based upon observations or upon reading, contribute to your own thinking is to have in mind a list of topics to serve as guides. These topics, ideally, should arise from your own recognition of the necessary divisions of the subject. It is sometimes helpful, however, to know what others have found to be significant. In the study of this book, the following questions on the individual chapters may be of assistance. They may be turned into topics—a single word or a brief phrase—to be used as guide topics on your note cards. It is not to be thought that the chapters in the text are isolated units. The questions asked under one chapter heading should lead to the taking of notes on related matters in other chapters. With these notes before you, it will not be difficult to write such papers as may be called for on any subject related to the nature and functions of language and literature.

Chapter I

1. Find formulations of the meaning of education. What is the difference between the learning of a series of facts and education?

2. How may facts be utilized in the processes of education?

3. What is the relation of education to your own attitudes toward yourself? toward your fellows? toward books? toward your social environment?

4. What mental attitudes characterize an educated man?

Chapter 2

1. What is the meaning of the "scientific attitude"?
2. Why is a scientific attitude of mind especially necessary in a democracy?
3. What relation have scientific methods of thinking to your adjustment to college work? to your life after college? to books? to the elimination of prejudices?
4. Compare the attitude toward books and reading expressed by Schopenhauer with the attitudes of Locke, Bacon, and Ruskin. Is it wholly correct to say that reading is merely "thinking with some one else's head"?
5. How may books be utilized to develop a "scientific attitude of mind," and to contribute to your own thinking?
6. How may bad habits of reading interfere with education?

Chapter 3

1. How does the history of language show the development of civilization?
2. How does language affect mental development?
3. To what extent is language necessary for thought?
4. How does language grow?
5. In what sense is language the instrument for the transmission of civilization from one generation to another?
6. How do words sometimes interfere with thinking? Are there any situations in college life where such interference is evident?

Chapter 4

1. How can you be sure that words mean to you what they mean to others?
2. Why are new words added to the language constantly?
3. What are the sources for new words?
4. How and why do words change meaning?
5. How do words change form?

6. Under what circumstances did the large Latin element enter the English language?

7. What are the conditions under which language changes rapidly?

8. What conditions tend to check the changes in language?

9. How do dialects arise?

Chapter 5

1. List the occasions in the life of the business or professional man when effective speech is an asset.

2. What are some of the characteristics of good colloquial speech? of good business speech? of good speech for formal addresses?

3. Why is effective writing so much more difficult than ordinary speech?

4. Why are there different "levels" of speech?

5. How may a mastery of speech contribute to the development of a "scientific attitude of mind"?

6. What relation has the knowledge of word meanings to the utilization of books in your education?

Chapter 6

1. What relation has art, especially literature, to the discussions of the functions of language in Chapter 3?

2. What is the relation of self-cultivation through art and the answers to the questions raised in Chapter 1 about the kind of individual you are, and about education?

3. In what sense may art be said to be an "essential of education"?

4. Why can art never be merely a copy of nature?

5. How can art be "true" and at the same time "selective" and "ideal"?

6. Why is there at the present time a revolt against realistic stage settings in the theater, and against the naturalistic novel?

7. In what sense does literature "organize" our experiences so as to show new values?

8. What is the meaning of the phrase "esthetic experience"?

9. How may the various arts contribute to the building of new attitudes of mind?

10. In what ways has literature contributed to the development of our civilization?

11. What is the function of literature in the development of the individual?

Chapter 7

1. What is the meaning of the statement that it is the function of poetry "to make patterns of life"?

2. Why is there constant effort to create new patterns in poetry? Is this effort in any way related to the efforts of the scientist to evolve new theories to describe the phenomena of nature?

3. What is the meaning of the word "imagination" as used in discussions of poetry?

4. What is there in the nature of poetry which makes it "an essential element in education"?

5. In what sense is poetry "selective" and "ideal"?

6. How does Hebrew poetry differ in "pattern" from the poetry of Tennyson?

Chapter 8

1. To what extent does the article on "Creative Reading" answer the statements of Schopenhauer about reading?

2. How can the reading of literary criticism increase our enjoyment of literature? Does a knowledge of the "rules of the game" increase the enjoyment of a baseball game?

3. What need has the writer for criticism?

4. What are some of the functions of literary criticism?

5. In what sense is it true that all art "has moral implications"?

6. What constitutes the immoral in literature? Is it the subject matter or the method of treatment? How may one writer treat a given theme and produce a work of value, and another treat the same theme and produce an immoral book?

7. How is the informal discussion of books in friendly conversation related to literary criticism?

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1. Coinage
   1. Changes in form
   2. " " application or grammatical habit
   3. " in meaning.
2. Obsolescence
3. Borrowing
   1. Same as 1.
   2.
   3.

process which we
designate as compou
which deals with
those words deali
of a distinct words
Strictly speaking
a hybrid results fro
any process of
addition in which
we combine elements
of different sources
But we have the differ
process of hybridis
which we refer to
two words of different
sources. All hybrid

On all word
processes in which
the element of
addition features
we may accurately
say that we engage
Agriculture where
we have built up
the stem On the
work likely where
we have added a
suffix - On hybrids
where we have put
together two elements
of different sources but
we have the specific